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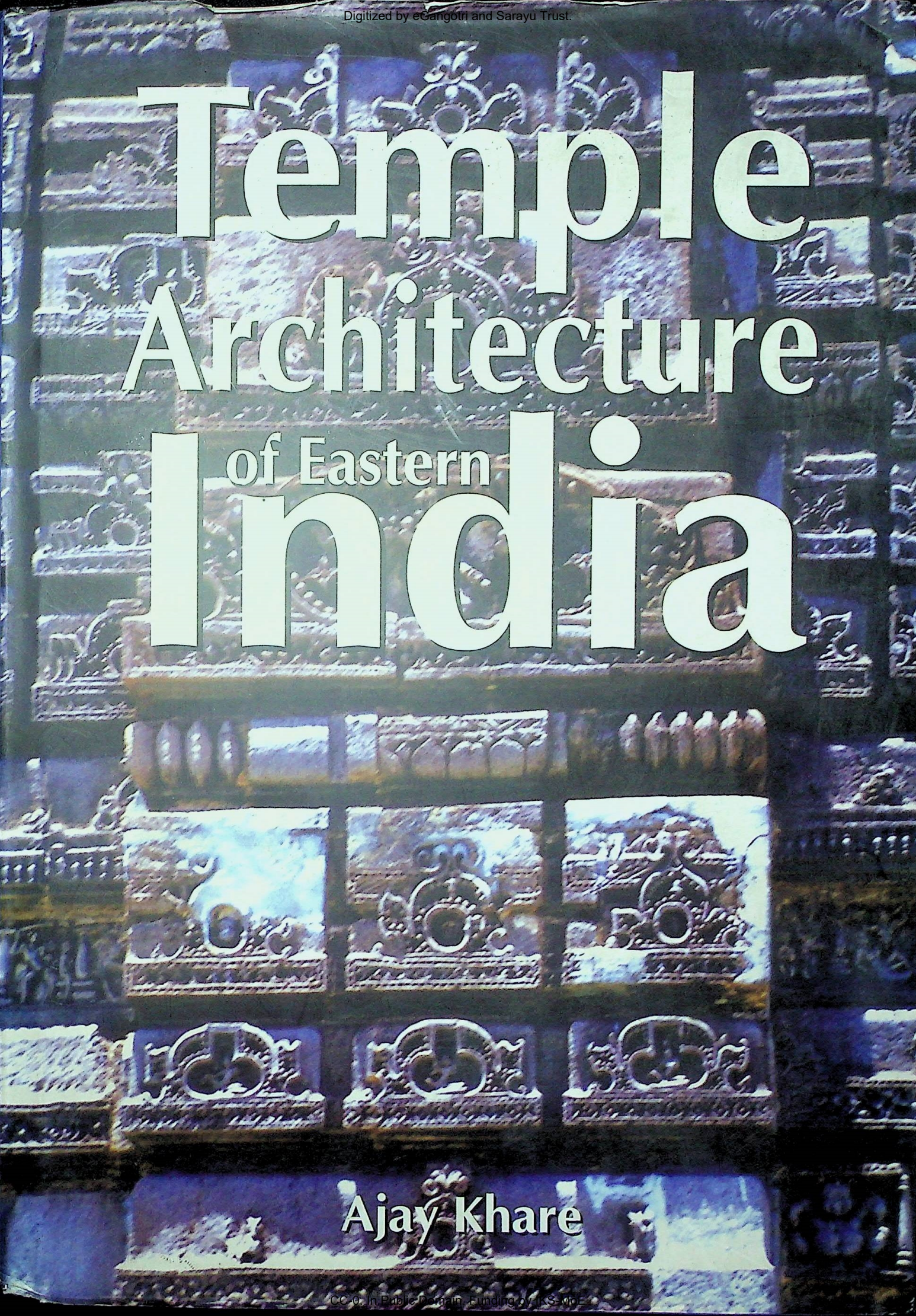
Temple Architecture of Eastern India



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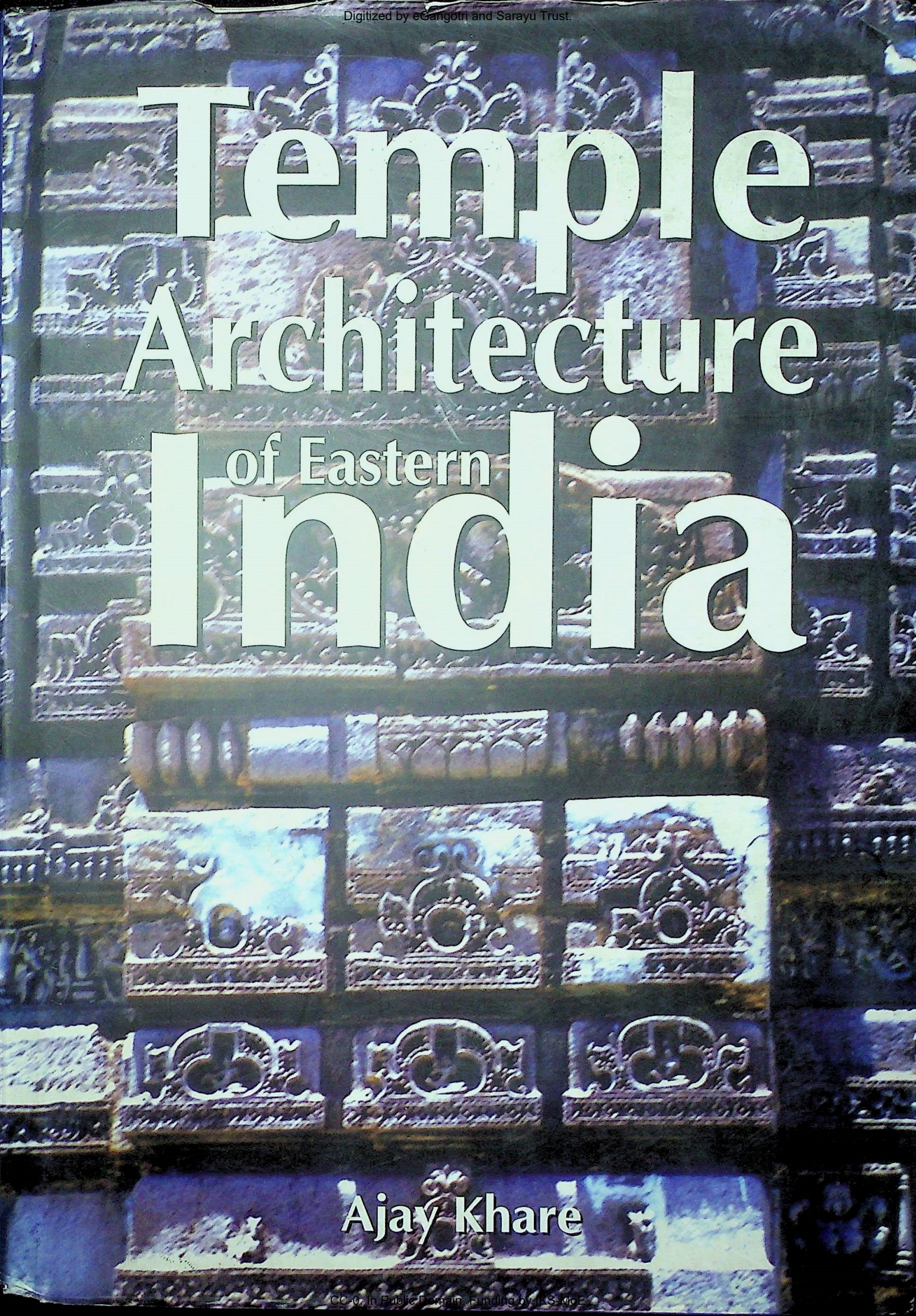

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About the book

This book is a systematic overview of the temple architecture built in eastern India between the ninth and sixteenth centuries. Spanning eight hundred years, it defines the tradition of Temple Architecture of eastern India and examines the traits of continuity and of disruption in the tradition.

In the absence of many extant examples of temples in the region during this whole period, the study uses the architectural fragments and votive shrines housed in various archives and museums of the world. The study locates and identifies more than forty temples of the period up to 1500 CE, and goes on to document and analyse them in order to develop an understanding of a regional type of *nagara* temple. The study identifies the presence of all three modes called *latina, phamsana* and *valabhi* of the north Indian *nagara* tradition of temple architecture. An important aspect of the study is the analysis of these *latina* temples in terms of their aedicular components, identifying the presence of *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules superimposed on the body of the *latina* temples.

Another significant feature of the study is the analysis of the re-use of earlier Hindu-Buddhist architectural fragments in later Islamic structures in order to develop an understanding of the earlier architecture and to show how the re-use of such fragments influenced the architecture of the Sultanate period in a major way, forming the basis of an architectural vocabulary.

In the concluding part, the origin and development of the Mughal period temples characterized by the *chala, bangla and ratna* types is explained, while emphasizing the continuities and elements of disruptions that had taken place since the beginning of the ninth century.

The foreword of the book is written by Dr. George Michell who have earlier edited two best known books on the architecture of the region: *Brick Temples of Bengal (From the Archives of David McCutchion)* PUP, Princeton, New Jersey, 1983 and *Islamic Heritage of Bengal* UNESCO publications, Paris, 1984.

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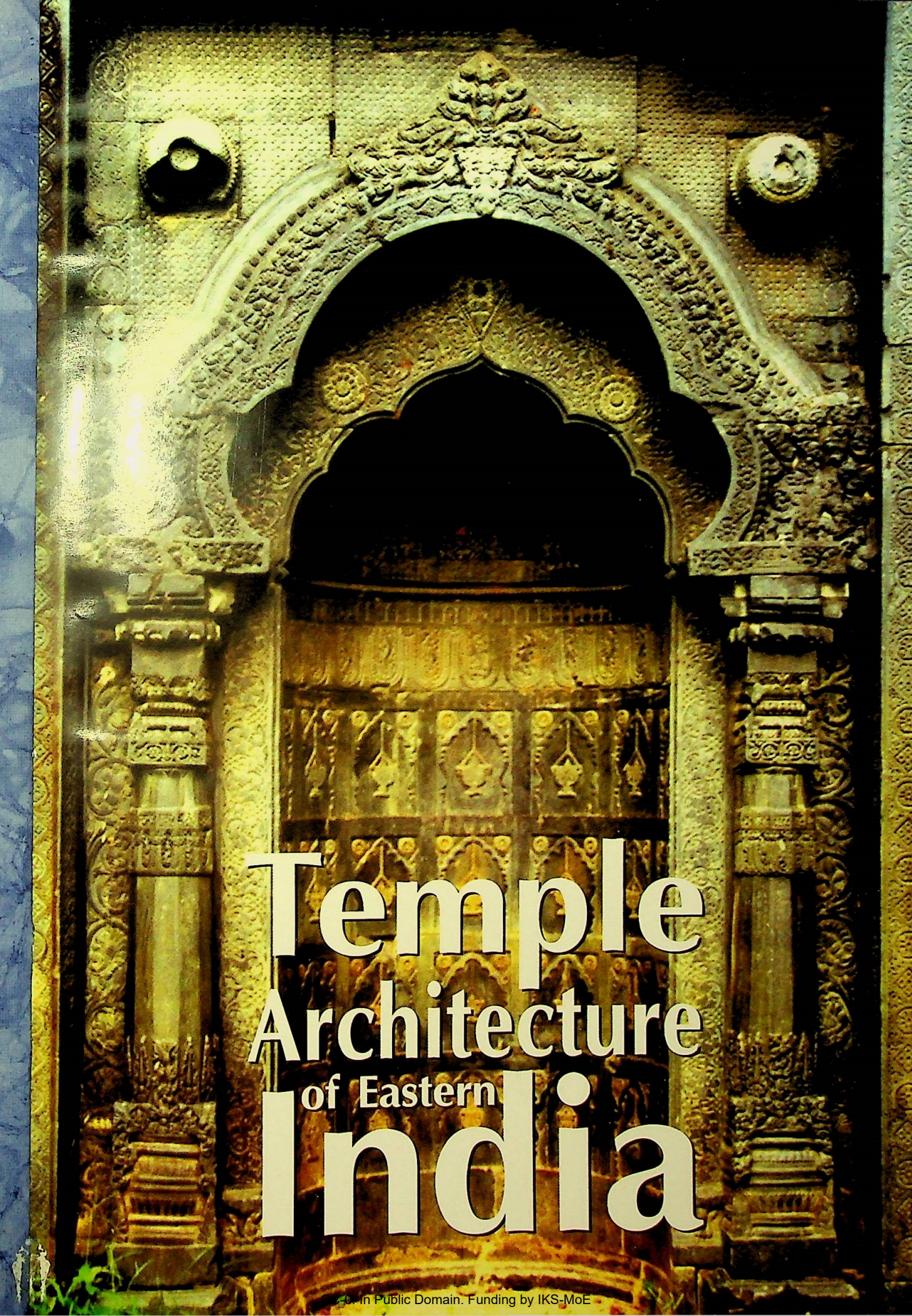

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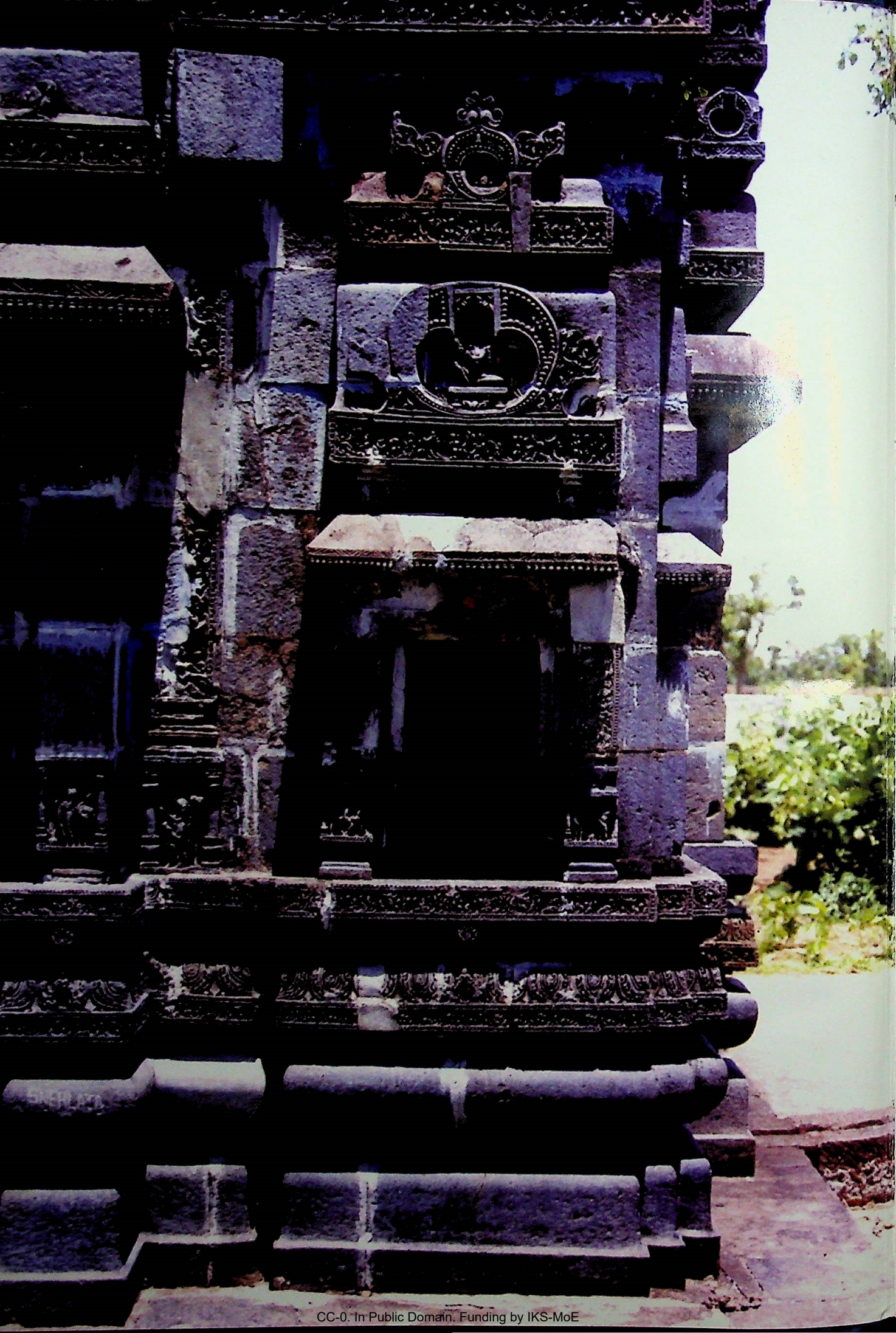

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Temple Architecture of Eastern India

Text, Photographs and Drawings by
Ajay Khare

Foreword by
George Michell

Shubhi Publications
Gurgaon, India

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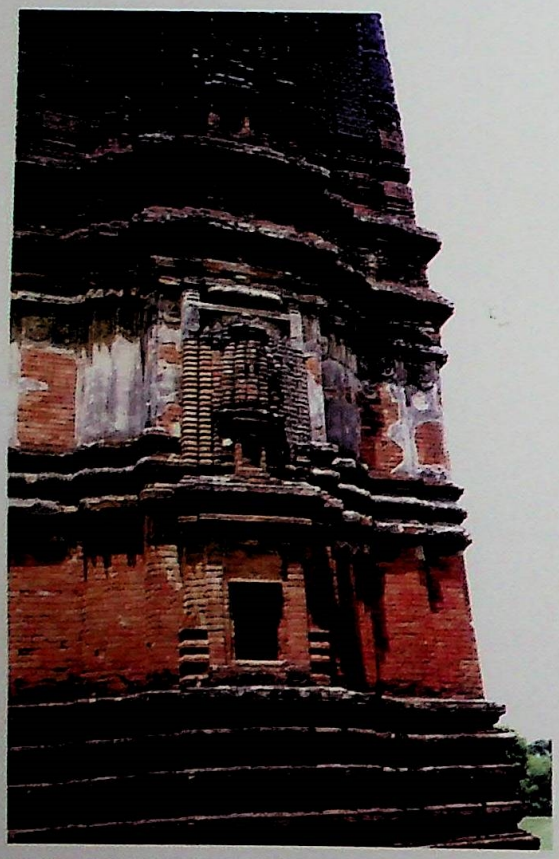

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Foreword

Temple architecture in eastern India – a region encompassing present-day eastern Jharkand, eastern Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh – is a much-neglected subject, mostly because of the scarcity of extant buildings dating from the pre-Islamic period. Most temples in this region were constructed in brick and have not survived through the centuries. However, the doorjambs, niche pediments and votive images of these buildings were usually fashioned in basalt, and many such fragments and icons have been discovered over the years. They confirm that temples consecrated to different Hindu and Buddhist cults must indeed have existed in early times, but they have simply been lost. In addition to these fragments, there do exist a number of dilapidated and /or much reconstructed brick and stone monuments. Because of their isolated locations, most of these monuments have escaped the attention of architectural historians. (The most celebrated temples in the region, the ninth-fifteenth century group of Hindu monuments at Telkupi, were submerged in a dam project in the 1960s and can no longer be studied.) Such stone and brick vestiges serve as a frustratingly incomplete testament to a flourishing architectural tradition, of which we have insufficient knowledge. However, thanks to the exhaustive survey of the existing remains presented by Ajay Khare in this volume, it is now possible to form the best possible understanding of the evolution of temple architecture in this part of India. The survey covers a period extending from the ninth to sixteenth centuries and is the most comprehensive to be published.

While scholars and students will be grateful to Khare for compiling all known data for eastern Indian temple architecture, ranging from sculptural fragments in museums to little visited buildings at outlying sites (helpfully located on regional maps), they are certain also to be impressed by his analytical skills. The author subjects the sculptural fragments and various religious monuments to a rigorous formal analysis in order to distinguish three principal architectural styles, which he identifies as Barakar, Telkupi and Deul style. Having characterised the principal characteristics of these styles in an introductory chapter, Khare then proceeds to demonstrate their parallel evolution over some five centuries. Significantly, this architectural development continues virtually without interruption into what is generally regarded as the Islamic period. The result is an exchange of techniques and motifs leading to a common architectural language shared by both temples and mosques. Sensibly avoiding labelling this common style as either "Hindu" or "Muslim", Khare emphasises the overall regional nature of architecture in eastern India by formally analysing the Sultanate period architecture. The volume concludes with a brief survey of temple styles in Bengal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These diminutive brick structures with terracotta decorations present a lively epilogue to what must be regarded as one of the most innovative phases of temple architecture to be found anywhere in India.

George Michell

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Acknowledgements

In the last stages of this study, I lost my father, the main source of my inspiration in his mortal form. As a firm believer of Hindu concept of life and death of the body and permanence of the soul, I always felt his presence and I dedicate this work to his memory.

This volume is the result of the research done for my PhD degree and I could even dream about this study only because of Dr. Adam Hardy. His various writings inspired me to study the Hindu temple architecture and much needed guidance to formulate the ideas of research came pouring down from him even before my formal enrolment at De Montfort University, Leicester. More than a supervisor, Dr. Hardy remained and will always remain my mentor. I express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Adam Hardy and sincerely wish our friendship to grow further. The research bursary of the De Montfort University and their procedure of research degrees made this work possible while doing major fieldwork in India. I am extremely thankful to all good offices of the De Montfort University for their support in UK and in India.

I am lucky to have received support from Dr. George Michell who gave a head start to my work and happily presented his book 'The Islamic Heritage of Bengal'. One major moment of my study came when Dr. Michell introduced me to a group of scholars in the 4th International Congress on Bengal Art held at Kolkata. This group led by Dr. Enamul Haque proved a great resource for my research and this friendship grew further with the 5th International Congress on Bengal Art held at Dhaka, where I could present a part of my this study in front of the group comprising S. S. Biswas, Zulekha Haque, Alamgir Khoundkar, S. N. Mitra, A. J. Gail, Gautam Sengupta, all major contributors of the field of knowledge about Bengal Art. The 6th International Congress on Bengal Art is being organised by me at Ranchi in 2005 and I hope the friendship with this group of some 50 scholars from all over the world to get stronger.

I was again fortunate to have Dr. George Michell as my external examiner of the PhD viva when he emphasized the need for publishing this research study. I am extremely thankful to him for immediately agreeing to write the foreword for this book, as there could have not been a more appropriate person than him, who has books to his credit both about Hindu and Islamic architecture of Bengal.

My wayward ideas of research could be streamlined by the help of Dr. Crispin Branfoot. His knowledge about Indian temple architecture helped me from initial stages of my work, when he gave the names of the rare and special books about history, culture and architecture of eastern India. He remained a patient listener, keen observer and active supervisor all through my work and was very helpful with the text at all stages. To him I owe the art and science of research work.

The various activities of PRASADA under Dr. Hardy was always a stimulus for good research and other members of PRASADA, Dr. Elizabeth Lambourn, Dr. Imre Bangha were very helpful with their advice and help and so were my fellow researchers. In 2003 the presence of Dr Michael Willis in PRASADA further enriched my work and I am thankful to him for his inspiring words and his books, which he very kindly presented to me. He later examined my research as an examiner and his valuable suggestions are included in this volume.

In India I received valuable advice from Prof. Nalini M. Thakur. S.P.A., N.Delhi, my teacher of college days and Dr. Shikha Jain, a fellow research scholar at PRASADA. Dr. Dilip K. Chakrabarti of Cambridge University introduced some new sites of the ancient temples and helped in understanding the value of the remains at Chhotanagpur plateau and its fringes in Bengal.

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Apart from the library of the De Montfort University, the libraries of SOAS and V&A Museum, London were of immense help. I received some inputs from the Cambridge University library and the library of the British Museum also. In India I regularly visited the libraries of Indian Museum, Asiatic Society, and Calcutta University at Kolkata. In Bangladesh the libraries of ICSBA and National Museum, Dhaka were of great help. The museums visited for this research study are the Indian Museum, Ashutosh Museum and State Museum at Kolkata, the National Museum at Dhaka and the British Museum, London. Robert Skelton kindly provided me the permission to view archives of David J. McCutchion housed in Victoria &Albert Museum, London.

My Institute, Birla Institute of Technology, Ranchi kindly provided me study leave to pursue this study and visits of UK and I express my gratitude for this kindness to BIT authorities and for allowing me to use various facilities for research. My fieldwork and documentation were helped by my B. Arch. students Sheetal and Rangan who also acted as my interpreter for the Bangla language. Two of my friends Dr. Sudipa and Dr. Suchandra Ghosh of Calcutta University helped in various ways to make my research fruitful to Bengali Community.

The members of my larger family remained associated with my immediate family during my long absence for visits to the University in UK or for the fieldwork. As always I owe most to my wife, Rachna, an architect and a fellow teacher, who acted as a loyal friend and critic during discussions about the subject. Her formative contribution for the work cannot be measured nor her commitment for the cause of academics, as she shared a lot of my responsibilities at home and at work to provide me enough time for research. The blessings of my mother guided me through this work and in the sounds of my autistic son's whispers, I heard the bells of Bengal temples ringing.

In the end I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Sanjay Arya of the Shubhi Publications who initiated the idea of publishing this volume and helped to realize my dream, and Ms. C. Sujatha and Mr. Birendra Prasad, the graphic designers who took all the pains to complete the book in record time. Lastly I express my gratitude for the car drivers and boatmen who braved bad roads, bad weather and took me to the remotest corners of Bengal.

Ajay Khare

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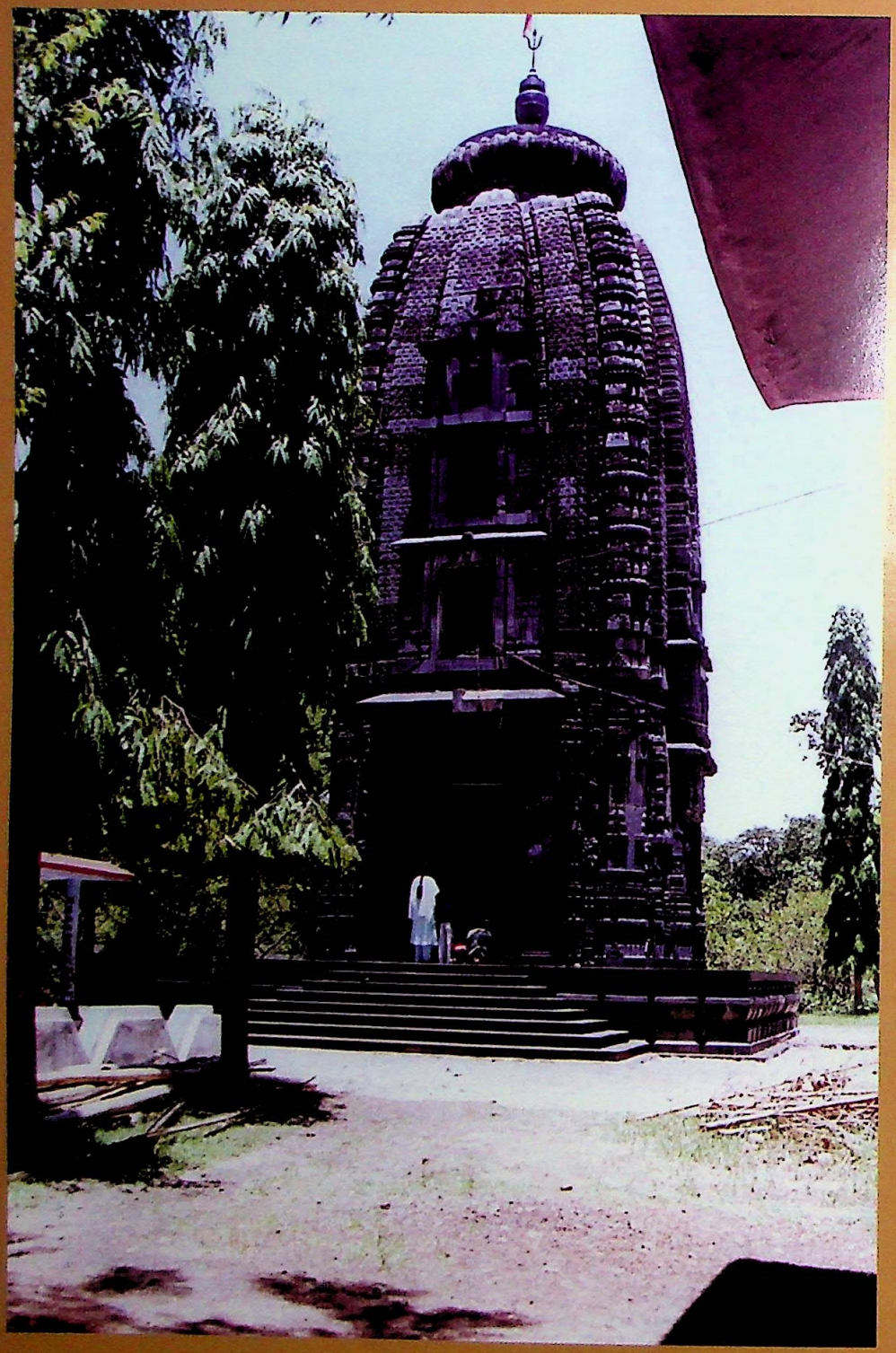

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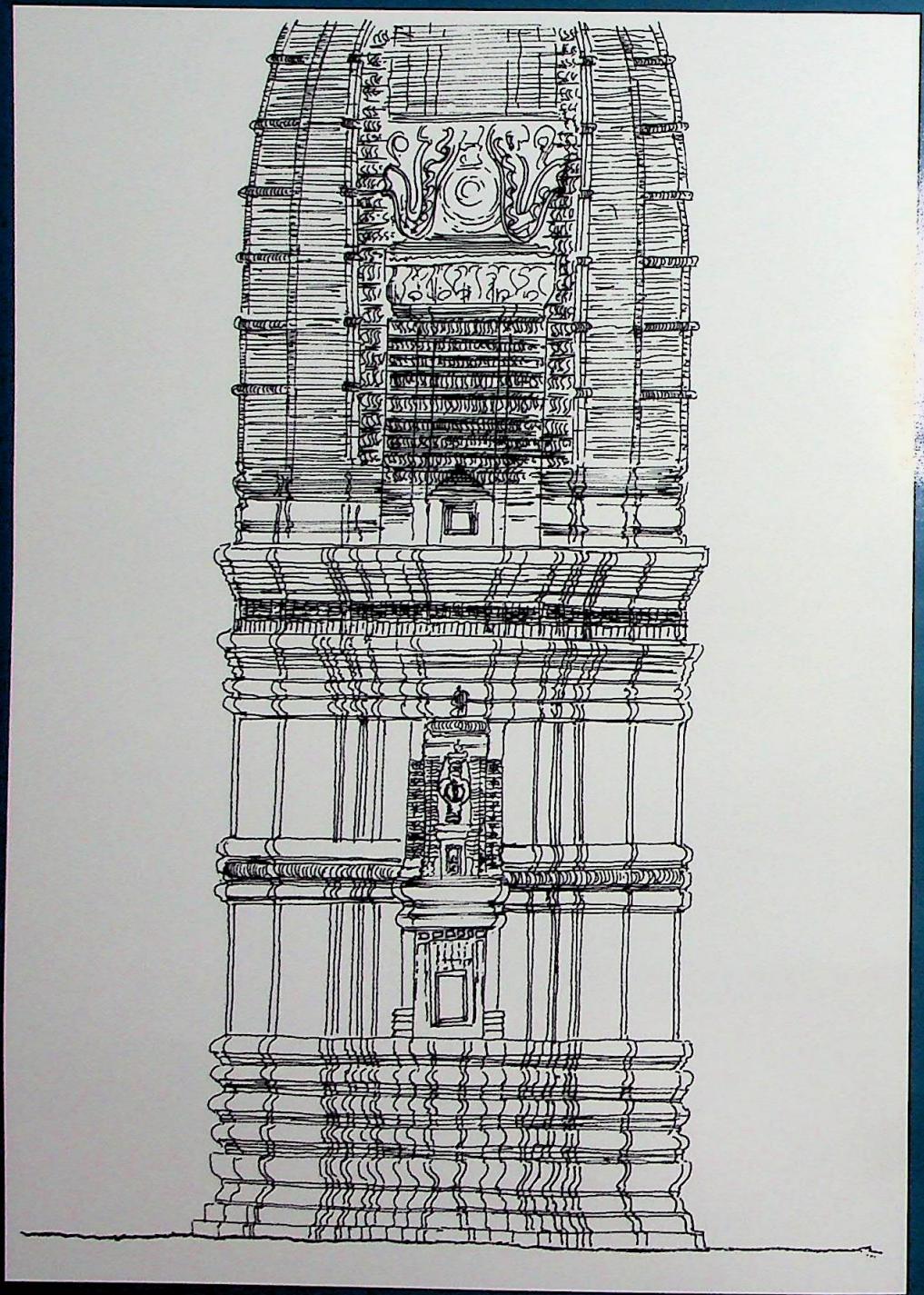

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Summary Chart

Time Scale	Historical events	Hindu temple architecture						Islamic Architecture
800 CE	Early Pala period	Nagara temple tradition					Vernacular tradition Merging with Islamic Principles 1425 CE onwards	
850 CE	Well established Pala Empire	*Latina*			*Phamsana*	*Valabhi*		
900 CE		Emergence of Barakar type in *Latina* mode at Barakar and on Orissa-Bengal border (Khiching)			Atbaichandi, Hakanda Maynapur	Representation on arch fragments		
950 CE		Barakar type contd.	Telkupi type in *Latina* mode	Deul type in *Latina* mode	Ektesvara	Use of *valabhi* aedicule		
1000 CE		Barakar type in Chhotanagpur	Banda temple	Satdeuliya Sunderbans	Kangareshwara, Garhbeta			
1050 CE	Emergence of Senas	Barakar type in Bengal	Budhpur, *Panchaytana*	Sonatapal, Boram, I, II, III Durga, Para		Use of *valabhi* aedicule with longer side		
1100 CE	Rule of Sena dynasty	Bankura	Telkupi	Bahulara				
1150 CE			Pakbira temples		Syamalesvara, Dantan			
1200 CE			Telkupi	Dihar temples				Pichhli mosque, Ibrahim Bayyu's tomb
1250 CE	Islamic conquest of Bengal		Ambikanagar, Khiching		Sarvamangala, Kesiari			Tribeni mosque Tribeni tomb, Bari mosque and minaret at Chhota pandua
1300 CE	Delhi Rule		Boram, Telkupi					
1350 CE	Independent Sultanate		Para temple		Siva, Kesiari			
1400 CE	Emergence of local kings and Rule of Raja Ganesh House			Gaurangpur Deul				Adina mosque with large court
1450 CE		Merging of all three latina types Barakar I & II, Barakar III Pandra temples, Ghutgeria Deul Wari *panchaytana*			Garhbeta, Telkupi	Sarvamangala *valabhi* temple	Square covered Eklakhi tomb, Covered mosques of Lattan, Tantipara, Chhota Sona, Gaur with curved cornice of the rural hut	
1500 CE	Hussain Shahi Bengal & Hindu Revival				*Charchala* temple at Ghatal			
1550 CE	End of Sultanate rule					*Jorbangla* Chaitanyadeva	Qadam Rasul complex, Gaur	
1600 CE	Rule of Mughal governors	*Ekaratna* and *Pancharatna* temples Shyamraya, Bishnupur, Vasudev, Hooghly, *Navaratna* temples			Raynagar, Jessore, Gokarna Ghurisha temple *Atchala* shrines	Merging of Vernacular, Islamic and temple traditions Keshtaraya, Bishnupur Gopinath, Pabna		Rajmahal and Tanda as Capitals
1650 CE	Shift of capital to Dhaka							Sub-Imperial Mughal architecture

SUMMARY CHART SHOWING VARIOUS STAGES OF ARCHITECTURE OF EASTERN INDIA

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Introduction

Temple Architecture of Eastern India : 9 th to 16th Century

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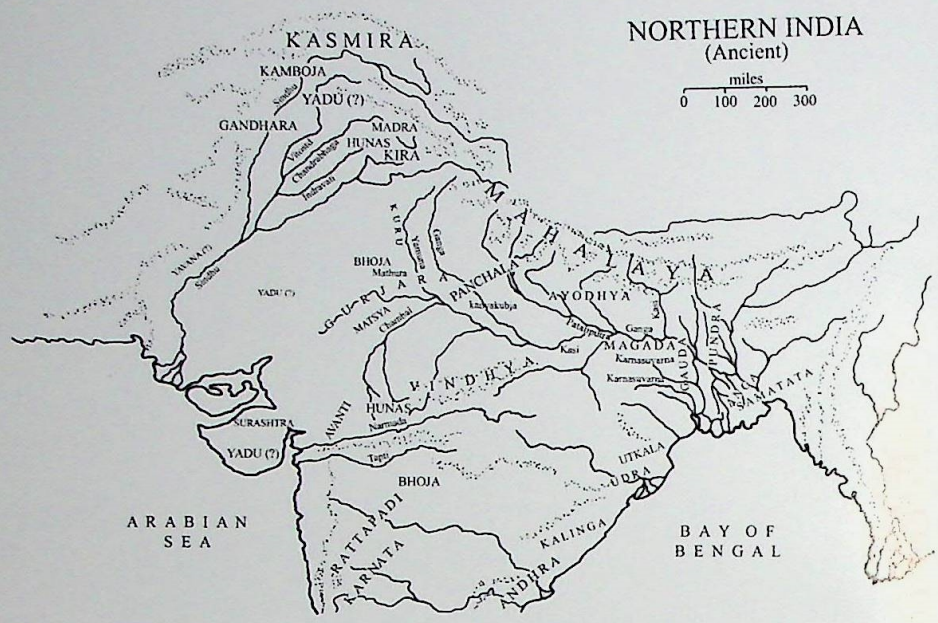

Map 1: *Mahajanapadas* in Ancient India. (Source: Architecture Department, BIT, Mesra)

Traditional Indian architecture was essentially a product of the soil and whatever touched it in the long course of its development grew into it giving it new form and colour in each successive phase. Viewed in this light Indian architecture may be seen to have a consistent growth in each age adding and adapting the incoming trends with those of the past in an organic manner. Since the times of the third century BCE Mauryan Empire, Bengal also added and adapted incoming trends, and through localisation, Bengal in the eastern part of India is known to have developed an individual culture and distinct identity evident in literature, plastic arts and architecture. Due to the nature of the soil and lack of stone, Bengal has very few extant architectural remains but a careful study reveals a great building tradition since the beginning of Pala rule in the late eighth century. Later after the Islamic conquest in the early thirteenth century, the region again added and adapted incoming trends to develop a regional style of architecture. With the nature of the soil and climate profoundly affecting the architecture, Bengal witnesses continuity in its architectural tradition.

This study presents a viewpoint that the tradition of Bengal architecture shows continuity throughout the course of its history. The study examines this hypothesis by systematically studying the tradition of the temple architecture in Bengal from the time of the foundation of the Pala empire, during the peaceful rule of the Palas and the Senas in the region, to the influences brought with the Islamic conquest and the development of the distinct Bengal architectural style during the period of independent Sultanate rule, through to the evolution of the later brick temples of Bengal with regional influences, a period spanning the 9th to the 16th centuries.

Bengal, in the context of this study, is intended to mean the territory that was the province of Bengal during the British period in India up to 1947. It included the present states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar in the Union of India and whole Bangladesh. This area closely corresponds to the area ruled by the Pala Empire, the *Sultanat-I-Bangla* of the Sultanate period and the *Suba-I-Bangla* of the Mughal period. As a geographical entity Bengal is a low-lying flood plain through which three great rivers of South Asia- the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna - pass and together with many of their tributaries deposit very fertile alluvial soil. The Hima-

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layan and Chittagaon hill tracts bound the region on the north and east and on the south it faces the Bay of Bengal (map 1).

Before outlining the main aims of this study a brief overview of architectural activities in Bengal is presented below which will help us to appreciate the available resources for this study. A comprehensive literature review of all known published works about Bengal architecture will follow the overview.

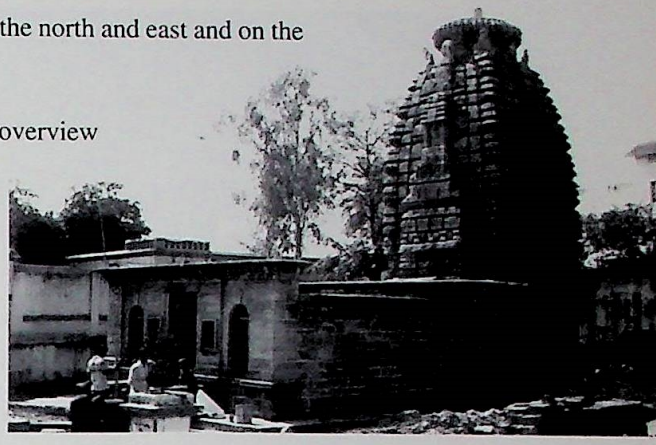

Fig 1.1: Earliest temple in the study region built in the *latina* mode of *nagara* tradition, Siddhesvara temple, Barakar, Burdwan, early ninth century.

A Brief Introduction of Architectural Activities in Eastern India

From the ninth century to the end of the twelfth century, eastern India was host to a fluorescence of artistic activity under the Pala–Sena dynasty rule. The Pala kings were great patrons of Buddhism and were associated with prominent Buddhist monasteries and sites. They were builders of many great monasteries such as Somapura Mahavihar at Paharpur and Vikramshila monastery at Antichak. The Pala kings also patronised the earlier monasteries of the Gupta period at Nalanda, Odantpuri, Rajgriha. During the early Pala period of Buddhist domination, Hindu structures were also built which later overshadowed the Buddhist developments. These rare extant structures are termed 'Vanga' style temples by Krishna Deva[1] and started to appear in southern Magadha and western Bengal by the beginning of the ninth century. The Hindu temples with spires in Bengal were built in the form of tall curvilinear *latina* temples in the north Indian *Nagara* tradition of architecture (fig.1.1) which may be the earliest temple structures in the region.[2] Till the end of the sixteenth century, we find a fair number of square single cell structures with roofs in tower forms (*Latina* mode) or tiered forms (*Phamsana* mode), both in brick and in stone covered with stuccowork, mainly in west Bengal.

Unlike the earlier Pala kings, the later Pala and Sena kings of the twelfth century were patrons of Hinduism and Hindu temple architecture might have flourished with great effect at Ramavati and Lakhnauti, the capitals of the Pala and Sena kings before 1200 CE in north Bengal. These capitals were however completely despoiled by the Muslims after their capture in 1204 CE in order to provide materials for their own capital at Gaur, south of Lakhnauti in present Malda district. There is ample evidence provided by reused material, including black basalt columns, lintels, doorways, and capitals in the Islamic structures of Gaur and Pandua as to the manner in which the temples and palaces of Bengal were architecturally decorated (fig.1.2-1.4).

During the Muslim conquest of 1204 CE, eastern India faced a lot of iconoclastic activity and many religious structures were also pulled down for materials. The Buddhist monasteries and sites, which lost patronage after Pala rule, became totally deserted and the faith lost its followers. During these turbulent times the Hindu

[1] Deva, Krishna. "Styles of separate lineage: Vanga style, phase 1, c. eighth-ninth centuries A. D., Palas." *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture* . (hereafter mentioned as EITA) Ed. Meister, Michael W. with M. A. Dhaky.Vol. II, part 2, North India, Period of Early Maturity, New Delhi: AIIS; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, chapter 43. pp. 394-407.

[2] Explained in the beginning of chapter three with all modes of the Nagara tradition. See drg. 3A, also see footnote no.30.

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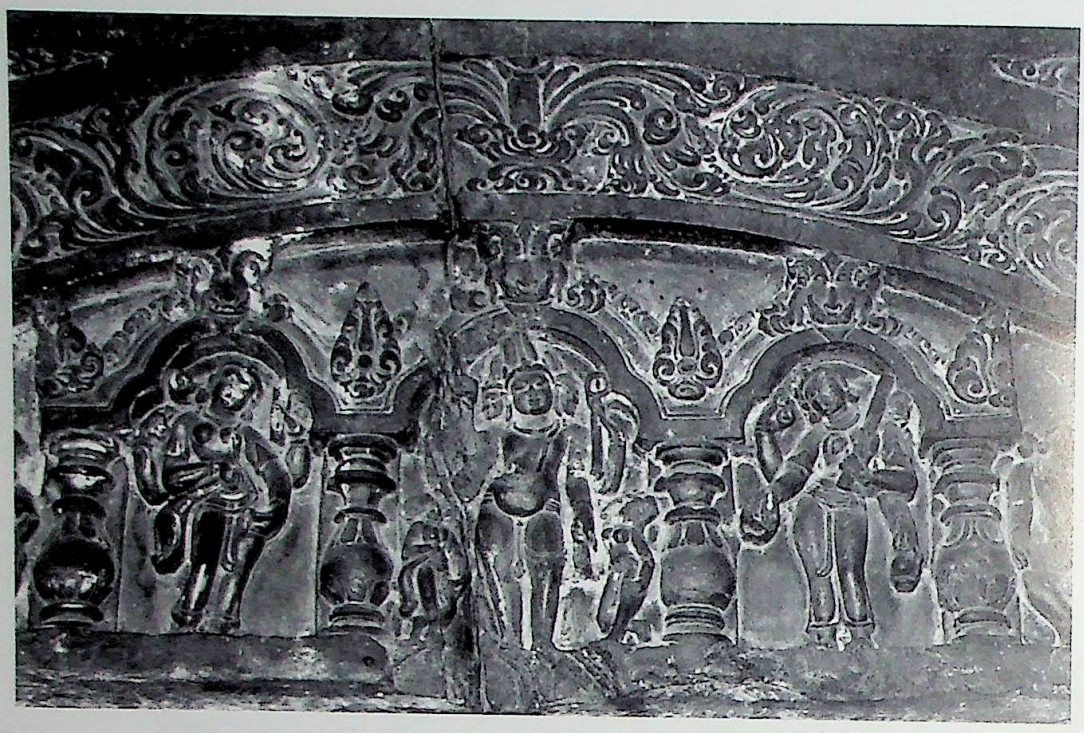

Fig 1.2: A basalt lintel collected from Gaur with Brahma in the central trefoil niche. Malda, Pala period.

deities were installed in simple hut type structures in rural Bengal. Originating from a simple cell, the modest hut temple gradually evolved into a system for masonry temples derived from the wooden houses and bamboo thatched huts of ancestral village dwellers. This development in rural Bengal was taking place simultaneously with the development of Islamic architecture in urban Bengal.

After the initial period of mayhem, Muslims started building structures of Islamic faith using materials of the destroyed earlier structures in an alien style unsuitable for long rainy season in Bengal's climate such as Adina Mosque in Pandua with huge open courtyard. But they soon realised the unsuitability of large courtyards and adopted the indigenous ways of building, with a few new structural features such as domes and vaults.[3] During the late fourteenth century and after Bengal's independence from the Delhi Sultanate, a distinctive Bengali culture took shape - especially evident in literature and architecture. The Sultanate architecture with Islamic vaults, domes and true arches developed in Bengal with local characteristics. The most visible feature was the curved cornice taken from the bent bamboo eaves of the village hut and the principal materials were brick and terracotta indigenous to a land without stone.

Meanwhile the architectural development of Hindu temples was continued through the patronage of small Hindu landholders and developed using bricks and terracotta as the principal material. Through the interaction with architectural developments in the Islamic part of Bengal this movement almost rose to classical heights. By the end of the sixteenth century a new style of temple architecture established itself that was the result of the intense interaction of Hindu and Muslim cultural movements. The style characterised itself with *Bangla, Chala* and *Ratna* type temples those have their superstructure supported on arches and vaults, and their formal and spatial aspects resulted from a fusion of indigenous Hindu traditions and Islamic

[3] Domes and vaults were new to Bengal with Muslims as mentioned by Percy Brown in *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period.* Bombay, 1956, Chapter VIII Provincial Style : Bengal 1300AD-1550AD.

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Fig 1.3: A basalt post with animated carvings re-used in doorway, Firuz Minar, Gaur, Malda.

influences (fig.1.5).[4] The curved sloping side of the roof of a Bengali hut built of bamboo frames and thatch is called *chala*, and based on this roof configuration the *chala* type temples were the first to appear. These were initially *charchala* i.e. with four sloping sides on the roof but soon adapted a multi-level roof pattern with eight or twelve sloping sides called *atchala* and *barochala* (fig.1.6). The *bangla* and *ratna* style developed from the *chala* form only with gable ended two sloping sides of the roof called *bangla* and a pinnacle resembling *latina shikhara* placed on the *chala* roof called *ratna.* This late medieval style of temple architecture continued during and even after the Mughal rule in Bengal in the eighteenth century and later with interesting variations (fig.1.7) (See summary table).

Literature Review

The religious architecture in Bengal has been treated by scholars as three separate movements, in three distinct periods: the period of the Pala and Sena dynasty rule (750-1200 CE) and the development of Hindu temples; the period of the Sultanate rule (1200-1550 CE) and the development of a regional style of Islamic architecture; and finally the late medieval period of Hindu revival (1550-1850 CE) and the development of *Bangla, Chala* and *Ratna* type temples.

[4] Explained in detail with examples in chapter eight.

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At present none of the Telkupi temples are surviving but the archetype can certainly be found in some extant temples in nearby areas. This publication by Mitra is of immense importance for the present study as the Telkupi site had temples of all modes of north Indian *Nagara* language of temple architecture belonging to all phases of the period of the present study.

In 1934, S. K. Saraswati[5] wrote for the first time about the temples of the early period (750 – 1200 CE) in Bengal in the *Journal of the Oriental Society of Art* published from Calcutta. He later wrote a chapter about the architecture of Bengal in the *History of Bengal* by R.C. Majumdar[6] in 1944. Both Saraswati's articles were a brief overview of the architectural activities in Bengal during 800 – 1200 CE based on manuscripts and a few extant remains. In Saraswati (1975)[7], he classifies the temples of Bengal on the basis of the Tibetan manuscripts of *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita* series housed in Cambridge University, Library. His works later came in the form of a book[8] in 1976, which is the only known work describing architecture of ancient Bengal prior to the Islamic conquest, called *Architecture of Bengal*. It examines the architecture of stupas, viharas and temples and includes a chapter on the temples at Pagan in neighbouring Burma. Though largely based upon manuscripts, votives and sculptures he gives a fair idea about the type of each building form using extant examples and archaeological remains. The subject of early temples of Bengal is described here in detail but with a few selected examples. In the absence of any drawings and due to the lack of illustrations, the study does not present a full picture of the temple architecture of the period. Since the time period of the study was political, this does not consider or list the temples built during the Islamic period in the parts of Bengal which were away from the Islamic influence.

One extremely valuable resource about the early temple architecture (800 – 1200 CE) of Bengal is the Memoirs of the ASI no. 76, *Telkupi- a submerged temple site in west Bengal* by Debala Mitra[9]. This report was prepared in 1960 when modern irrigation needs required an important temple site in Purulia district of West Bengal to be submerged in dam waters. Mitra writes that the description of the temples at Telkupi is largely posthumous, being based on all previous notices and photographs. These temples spread over more than seven centuries beginning with the ninth century or so formed an outstanding architectural group. Mitra calls them 'Telkupi archetype' and lists many extant structures in Purulia and Bankura district of this archetype. At present none of the Telkupi temples are surviving but the archetype can certainly be found in some extant temples in nearby areas. This publication is of immense importance for the present study as the Telkupi site had temples of all modes of north Indian *Nagara* language of temple architecture belonging to all phases of the period of the present study.

In the monumental work of Percy Brown[10] *Indian Architecture* published in 1942 and reprinted in 1965, Bengal architecture is taken up in a chapter entitled "The Brahmanical Buildings of Bengal (8th to 17th centuries)". He highlights two major issues:- that the architecture of the early period in Bengal have many similar examples other than mentioned by him in West Bengal including the temples seen in Khiching in northern Orissa and on the fringes of the Chhotanagpur plateau. Another issue he highlights is the lost temple type of the Pala-Sena period due to

[5] Saraswati, Sarasi K. "Temples of Bengal." *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 2:2 (1934), pp.130-140.

[6] Majumdar, R. C., ed. *The History of Bengal*, volumes 1 & 2. Dacca, 1976. First published in 1944.

[7] Saraswati, Sarasi K. "Rare Architectural Types in Manuscript Illustrations", *Bangladesh Lalitkala*, I.1, Bangladesh, January, 1975, pp. 1-10.

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[9] Mitra, Debala. *Telkupi- a submerged temple site in west Bengal*. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India No. 76, N. Delhi, 1969

[10] Brown, P. *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Periods*. Bombay, 1965, chapter 31.

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Fig 1.4: An exquisitely carved pillar from Rajmahal with Pala imagery, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

despoiling of the Hindu capitals after the Muslim conquest, now known from the many architectural fragments of the earlier periods used in the later Islamic structures.

While writing in the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture, North India, period of early maturity,*(1991),[11] Krishna Deva describes the early temple architecture in Bengal as 'Vanga' style but mentions only one example of *latina* temple at Barakar along with some Buddhist examples at Nalanda and Bodhgaya. Like Percy Brown he mentions that there are scores of other examples of the similar mode in the districts of Purulia, Midnapore and Bankura but stops short of listing them. Walter Smith (1996) in Grove Dictionary of Art[12] has written about the temples of Bengal as 'Vanga' temples saying that they are generally considered to be provincial variants of the Kalinga style. This very brief and general description about the temples of Bengal lists some significant examples of the study region at Khiching, Banda and Bahulara.

Very similar to Krishna Deva, Frederick Asher also details the Barakar example in the chapter- "Bridge to Pala Art" in his book *Art of Eastern India, 300-800.*[13] His work concluded in the year 800 so the early temples of Bengal do not figure in his work. However the chapter "Bridge to Pala Art" is valuable for the details about artistic activity in eastern India in the period of transition between Gupta and Pala rule. It also gives information about Paharpur, Vikramshila and Salban monasteries and some architectural elements of the early Pala period at Bodhgaya.

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[12] Smith, Walter. "Indian sub., III, 6(i)(d):11th-16th-century indigenous and traditional architecture: East, Vanga." *Grove Dictionary of Art.* Grove 1996. pp. 320-321.

[13] Asher, F.M. *The Art of Eastern India, 300 – 800.* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1980, pp. 69-101.

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Fig 1.5: Brick-built *bangla* temple with curved cornice and terracotta panels, Gangeshvara Shiva temple, Baranagar.

Chakrabarti (1993) [14] has mentioned some sites of the early period temples in Bengal such as Boram, Para, Pakbira, Banda, Tamar, Haradih, which were never covered by any earlier architectural study. He mentions the visits of J. D. Beglar and E. T. Dalton in the late nineteenth century and pleads for detailed studies of these sites before they are lost forever like the Telkupi site of many temples.

Research and studies in the field of Bengal art received a boost with the initial publication of the *Journal of Bengal Art* edited by Enamul Haque[15] from 1996. Seven volumes of this journal have been published till 2003 and they present the ongoing research in the field of art, archaeology and architecture of eastern India by researchers all over the world. In these volumes the architecture of the study period has not received much attention but the newfound enthusiasm amongst scholars generated new researches in the field of Islamic architecture such as Husain (1996 and 1997), Ray (1997), Michell (1997), Hasan (1997), Alamgir (1999).[16] For the present study very useful articles are published in this journal about the early phase of architecture in ancient Bengal and architectural motifs used on the scores of Pala period sculptures. With the help of terracotta plaques recovered from various archaeological sites of Bengal including Chandraketugarh, Karnasuvarna and Wari, Enamul Haque has presented a picture of the early phase of architecture of ancient Bengal from where we can observe some traits of continuity in Bengal architecture.

In a recent publication by Sudipa Bandyopadhyay (2002)[17], *Architectural Motifs in Early Mediaeval Art of Eastern India* the author tries to present a comprehensive picture of the architecture of the Pala-Sena period. This study excludes the use of any extant monuments, architectural fragments and votives and can best be termed

[14] Chakrabarti, Dilip K. *Archaeology of Eastern India: Chhotanagpur plateau and West Bengal.* New Delhi, 1993.

[15] Haque, Enamul. Ed. *Journal of Bengal Art*, Volume I (1996) to Volume VII (2003), International Centre for Studies of Bengal Art, Dhaka.

[16] Referred in the Islamic architecture section of this study and listed in the bibliography also.

[17] Bandyopadhyay, Sudipa. *Architectural Motifs in Early Mediaeval Art of Eastern India (Pala-Sena Period).* R. N. Bhattacharya, Kolkata, 2002.

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as intensive analysis and evaluation of the architectural motifs appearing on the sculptures of the Pala-Sena period alone.

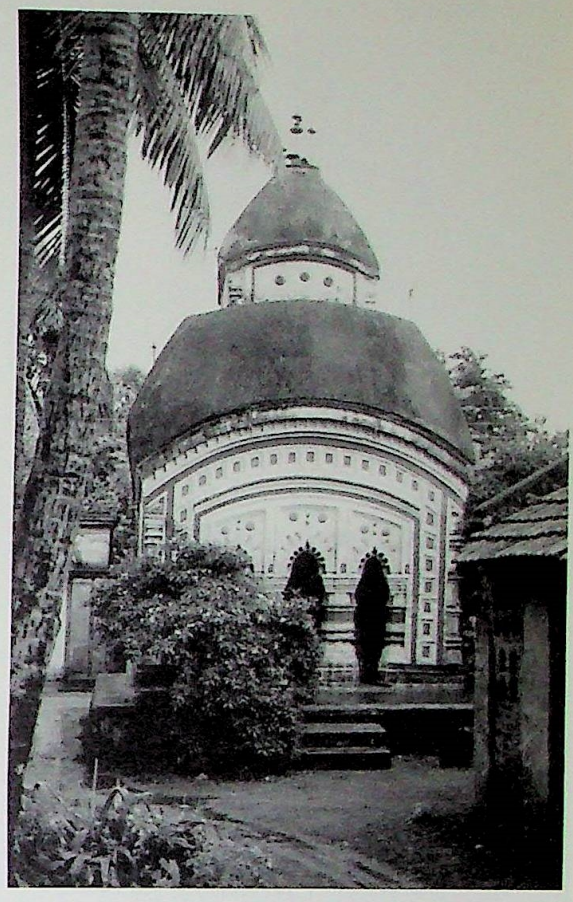

Fig 1.6: *Atchala* temple with eight sloping sides of two tiered roof, Gopala temple, Boragiri, Hooghly.

The subject of Sultanate architecture in Bengal is thoroughly covered by Dani,[18] (1961), Hasan,[19] (1979) and Michell,[20] (1985). These works are descriptive in nature documenting the extant examples of the period. Dani's work is the first detailed and fairly comprehensive account of Islamic architecture in Bengal. It classifies the whole Islamic period on the basis of the ruling dynasties and examines each building, sometimes complimented with plans. However, a brief but very useful article by Saraswati (1941)[21] started the research in the field of Islamic architecture after he documented some of the buildings on the basis of *Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua* by Abid Ali Khan edited and revised by H.E. Stapleton in 1931. S. M. Hasan extended the good work of Dani with detailed studies about the mosques of the Sultanate period. These studies were specifically devoted to the Muslim period in Bengal and did not see any relation of Islamic architecture with the earlier tradition of architecture in Bengal.

The UNESCO published volume *Islamic Heritage of Bengal* edited by George Michell has an inventory of all Islamic monuments in whole Bengal including Bangladesh prepared by Catherine Asher. In this valuable work are articles by various scholars who have observed some continuity in eastern Indian architecture: notable are the writings of David McCutchion, Enamul Haque and Perween Hasan. A reprinted article by McCutchion[22] "Hindu-Muslim Artistic Continuities in Bengal" in the UNESCO publication highlights the issue of artistic continuity within the Islamic and the late medieval architecture of Bengal. Perween Hasan[23], in her later writings, has compared the plans of Sultanate mosques with those of Buddhist structures and observed continuity in Bengal architecture. A recent study published in *Marg* 50 by Naseem Banerji[24] details the site of Adina mosque which she has thoroughly examined in her doctoral thesis. Her studies of the last decade culminated in *Architecture of the Adina Mosque at Pandua, India*[25] in which she has carefully detailed the re-use of the Pala-Sena niches as mihrab niches in the Adina mosque and the re-use of some other architectural fragments of the earlier period. Banerji's works are of special importance for this study as they provide an insight about the indigenous and extraneous elements used in the development of Sultanate architecture in Bengal and the influence of Sufism in the society of Islamic Bengal.

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[18] Dani, A. H. *Muslim Architecture in Bengal.* Dacca, 1961.
[19] Hasan, S. M. *Mosque Architecture of Pre Mughal Bengal.* Dacca, 1979.
[20] Michell, G, ed. *Islamic Heritage of Bengal.* UNESCO publications, Paris, 1985.
[21] Saraswati, S. K. "Indo-Muslim Architecture in Bengal." *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, volume IX, 1941, pp 12-36.
[22] McCutchion, David J. "Hindu-Muslim Artistic Continuities in Bengal." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, 13:3 (1968), pp.233-251.
[23] Hasan, Perween. "Sultanate Mosques and continuity in Bengal Architecture" *Muqarnas* 6 (1989), pp. 58-74.
[24] Banerji, Naseem A. "The Mihrabs in the Adina Mosque: Evidence of the Re-use of Late Pala-Sena Remains" *Marg 50* no.3 1999, pp.82-93.
[25] Banerji, Naseem A. *Architecture of the Adina Mosque at Pandua, India.* Mellen Press, New York, 2003.

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Bengal temple architecture of the late mediaeval period (1550 – 1850 CE) has received the attention of various scholars, initially in some articles of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*. Manmohan Chakravarty[26] names the late mediaeval temples of Bengal as 'Bengali Temples' and writes about their general characteristics in his 1909 article. For long period the temples with curved cornices are considered to be the only Bengali temples with other temple types getting no attention.

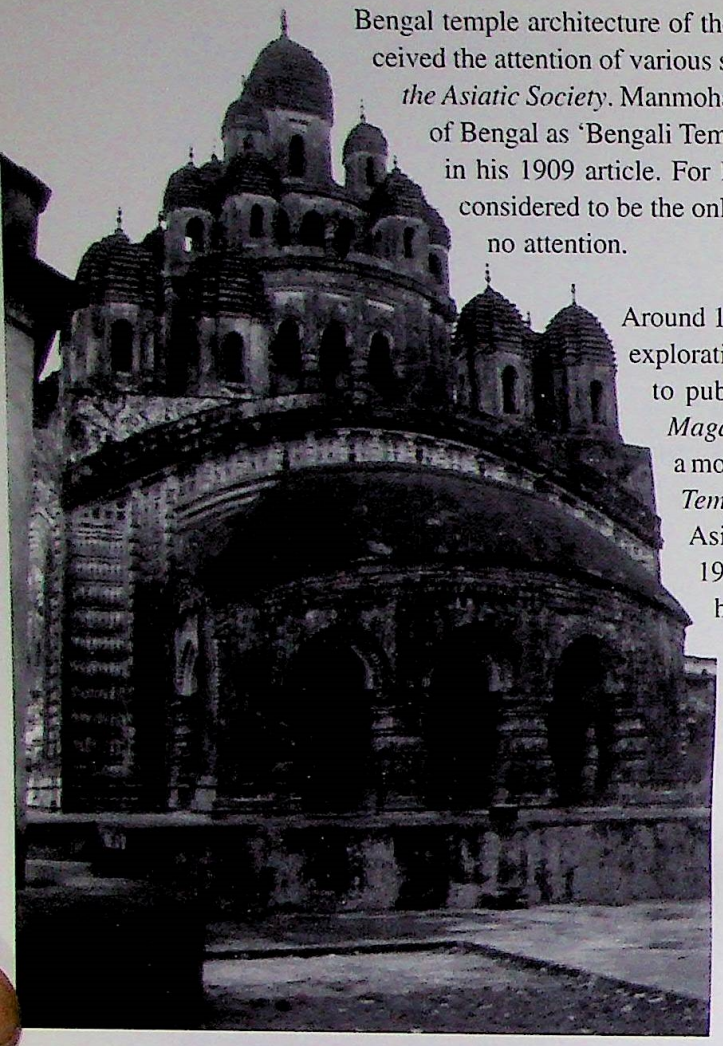

Fig 1.7: *Ratna* temples started with single spires and went on to become *panchvisati ratna* with twenty-five spires, Krishna-chandra temple, Kalna, Burdwan.

Around 1965, David J. McCutchion[27] started his pioneering exploration of late medieval temples of Bengal and started to publish a series of articles about them in *Railway Magazine*. The Asiatic Society later invited him to write a monograph about his studies: his book *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal-Origins and Classifications,* The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972 only appeared after his untimely death. Later his archives were housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum and George Michell was invited to write about the temples of Bengal. *Brick Temples of Bengal (From the Archives of David McCutchion)* was edited by George Michell with detailed description of iconography and well documented plans. It gives a classification on the basis of the form of these temples and covers almost all-existing temples of this period. It has an extensive collection of photographs of the temples and their terracotta plaques. Michell has also included a district-wise location plan of these temple sites, which is very valuable for any researcher. Here, the origin of these temples is not explained with respect to any earlier tradition in Bengal; rather these temples are seen as a break in the tradition, but what constituted the earlier tradition is not clear in these studies.

Bengal Temples written by B. K. Datta[28] published in 1975 attempts to cover the entire period of temple building in Bengal but suffers due to inadequate field work and scholarship when he fails to mention even once the earlier pioneering works of David McCutchion and Saraswati. His choice of examples does not cover even the most popular and important of the types he is mentioning. The book has some footnotes but does not include any bibliography. This is the only volume about the Bengal Temples that is easily available and has some good basic information such as 'materials used', 'date plates' and 'socio-religious and political background'.

In recent years, the subject of brick temples and terracotta decoration has received more attention than the early temples of Bengal. The book by S.S. Biswas[29] and

[26] Chakravarty, Manmohan. "Bengali Temples and Their General Characteristics." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* 5:5 (1909), pp.141-151.

[27] McCutchion, David J. *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal- Origins and Classifications*. The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972. & McCutchion, David J. *The Temples of the Bankura District*. Calcutta, 1972.& Michell, G, ed. *Brick Temples of Bengal (From the Archives of David McCutchion)*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1983.

[28] Datta, B.K. *Bengal Temples*. New Delhi, 1975.

[29] Biswas, S.S., Haque Z. *Terracotta Temples of Bengal*. Calcutta, 1995.

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Zulekha Haque *Terracotta Temples of Bengal* is a further extension of the works of Michell and McCutchion covering a few more districts. Good information in the book is the district – wise listing of various temples built in brick and stone, and, in addition to West Bengal this study also covers Bangladesh.

As may be seen from the above account the later brick temples of Bengal have received much wider attention of the scholars than the temples built before 1600 CE. The studies of the early temples (800 – 1200 CE) are insufficient to appreciate the wealth of heritage of Bengal located in the remote areas. If we carefully examine the available evidence, we can see that the foundations of the late mediaeval temples in Bengal may lie in the early examples of the temples built from the beginning of the Pala period. These early temples themselves undergo a process of change in the typical manner that Indian temple architecture gained from various influences. The most profound influences were received from within Islamic Bengal. Hence there is a need to see the tradition of Bengal temple architecture within the geographical extents of ancient Bengal during the period of 800 – 1600 CE as a whole so that the early temples of Bengal may get their rightful place in the history of architecture in Bengal and in relation to the broader tradition of Indian temple architecture.

If we carefully examine the available evidence, we can see that the foundations of the late mediaeval temples in Bengal may lie in the early examples of the temples built from the beginning of the Pala period. These early temples themselves undergo a process of change in the typical manner that Indian temple architecture gained from various influences.

Scope of the study

For any architectural study, visual and measured documentation is of immense importance. After the analysis of the available literature on the subject the study followed up by collating all the existing drawings and photographs, in published works and in the photographic archives of David McCutchion and S. N. Mitra available in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi. These were sources of great importance for the study of late medieval temples but did not contain any significant information on the early temples of Bengal.

To develop a wide understanding of the subject, a large number of sites were visited for first hand information and to find any un-documented examples. These visits included the important Islamic sites of the Sultanate capitals at Pandua and Gaur and also some sites of the nineteenth century temples. After the literature survey and visits it was observed that with one exception, the Hindu temples of the early period (800 – 1200 CE) and the Sultanate period (1200 – 1550 CE) in Bengal are un-documented and had not received much attention from scholars, probably due to their lesser number and relative inaccessibility as they are located in the deep rural pockets of Bengal. It was further observed that the formation of the late-mediaeval temples of Bengal is mainly attributed to the Islamic tradition and considered as a break in the tradition without adequate studies of the earlier traditions of Hindu temples.

Hence the focus of this study is on the Hindu temples built in Bengal during the Pala–Sena rule (800 – 1200 CE), during the Sultanate period (1200 – 1550 CE) and selected early temples (1550 – 1650 CE) of the late mediaeval period (1550 – 1850 CE). The study may be summarised as below:

- To establish a comprehensive architectural understanding of the tradition of temple architecture in Bengal between 800 and 1600 CE.
- To trace the architectural elements and characteristics which define this tradi-

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tion, and analyse the nature of continuity and change within the tradition.

- To explain the formation of the later style of Bengal temples after 1500 CE.

Presentation of the Study

The study begins with the geographical and historical context from the Mauryan period in around 300 BCE to the end of the Mughal period in the eighteenth century. Since the extant temples of the study period were noticed only in one geographical region of the western Bengal, a study of their representation in the architectural fragments, votives, sculptures, pillars, doorways, lintels kept in various museums of the world was made. Their places of provenance provided an indication of the spread of architectural activities and its language in almost the entire study region. It was noticed that the north Indian language of architecture called *Nagara* was well known in the study region; hence its possible sources in Orissa and Magadha region were examined. It is important to mention here that throughout this study Sanskrit terms for Indian temple architecture are used to keep the study in all India context. A glossary of all these terms along with their popular Bangla and Oriya terms is presented as appendix whereas a labelled diagram in chapter three explains the various parts of the temple with their Sanskrit terms.

Since the development of Hindu temple architecture took place mainly in smaller secondary states, the temple development is not described with any dynastic associations but by their mode of *Nagara*[30] language of architecture- *latina* and *phamsana*. The third mode *valabhi* was well known in Bengal but only one extant example was found. Most of the *latina* temples identified by this study were first mentioned only in the district gazetteers and tour reports of the ASI's British officers a century ago, and more than half of these temples have never before been the subject of an architectural study. These *latina* temples, also called *Rekha* temples in Bengal are placed in three types and are described and analysed in three different sections. These types might have developed in a sequence as they are described on the basis of stylistic evidence.

The extant temples of the *phamsana* mode are rare in Bengal but their influence on the *latina* temples is very widespread. As the representations of *phamsana* mode in votives and architectural elements described in chapter three amply suggest, the mode was not only well known in Bengal but was preferred one during the early Pala period. The extant temples of the *phamsana* mode are described in the chapter six following the *latina* temples. The story of architecture prior to the Islamic conquest of Bengal cannot be complete without studying the large number of architectural elements such as arch surrounds, image niches, doorframes with post and lintels, pillars, pilasters and other architectural fragments. This study is placed with the *phamsana* temples just before the study of the Islamic architecture in Bengal.

The study of Islamic architecture is taken up with an aim to understand the re-use of the parts of earlier structures in later Islamic structures. The aim here is to understand the role of spolia in originating a new vocabulary and evolution of Islamic architecture in Bengal. This part of the study is done in two chronological divisions with the

[30] The use of terms 'language' for north Indian 'nagara' tradition of temple architecture and 'modes' for three types of '*Nagara*' tradition is taken from the various writings of Adam Hardy. For a brief introduction of nagara tradition, see Hardy, Adam. "Sekhari Temples." *Artibus Asiae*, The Museum Rietberg, Zurich. Vol. LXII, No.1, 2002, pp. 81-137. For the readers of this study these terms are explained in the beginning of the chapter three with drawings.

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help of important representative structures, and an understanding of the indigenous and extraneous elements in Islamic architecture was developed while tracing their roots in earlier architectural traditions. Islamic architecture later influenced the temple architecture of Bengal, which is studied in the next section of the research. These studies are followed by an analysis of the formation of the style of Bengal temples after 1550 CE, explaining their peculiarities in relation to the broader traditions of Indian temple architecture. The late mediaeval period examples are taken from the earlier visits done at the start of the study; their published drawings in George Michell's work are used for further analysis.

This has resulted into an understanding of the architectural tradition during the period as a whole, identifying the elements, spatial characteristics, motifs and stylistic traits that manifest continuity in the tradition, while tracing the patterns of change and any effects of disruption.

Through out the study footnotes are used for any reference or explanation. Any sources quoted in a chapter are given as full reference for the first time and subsequently in brief. The Bibliography at the end of the report is a compilation of all available sources on the subject which were referred for this research.¶

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Door of the Firuz Minar, Gaur

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Rajamahal Pillar, Indian Museum, Kolkata

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Gangeshvara Shiva Temple, Baranagar

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Historical Context

of the Temple Architecture of Eastern India

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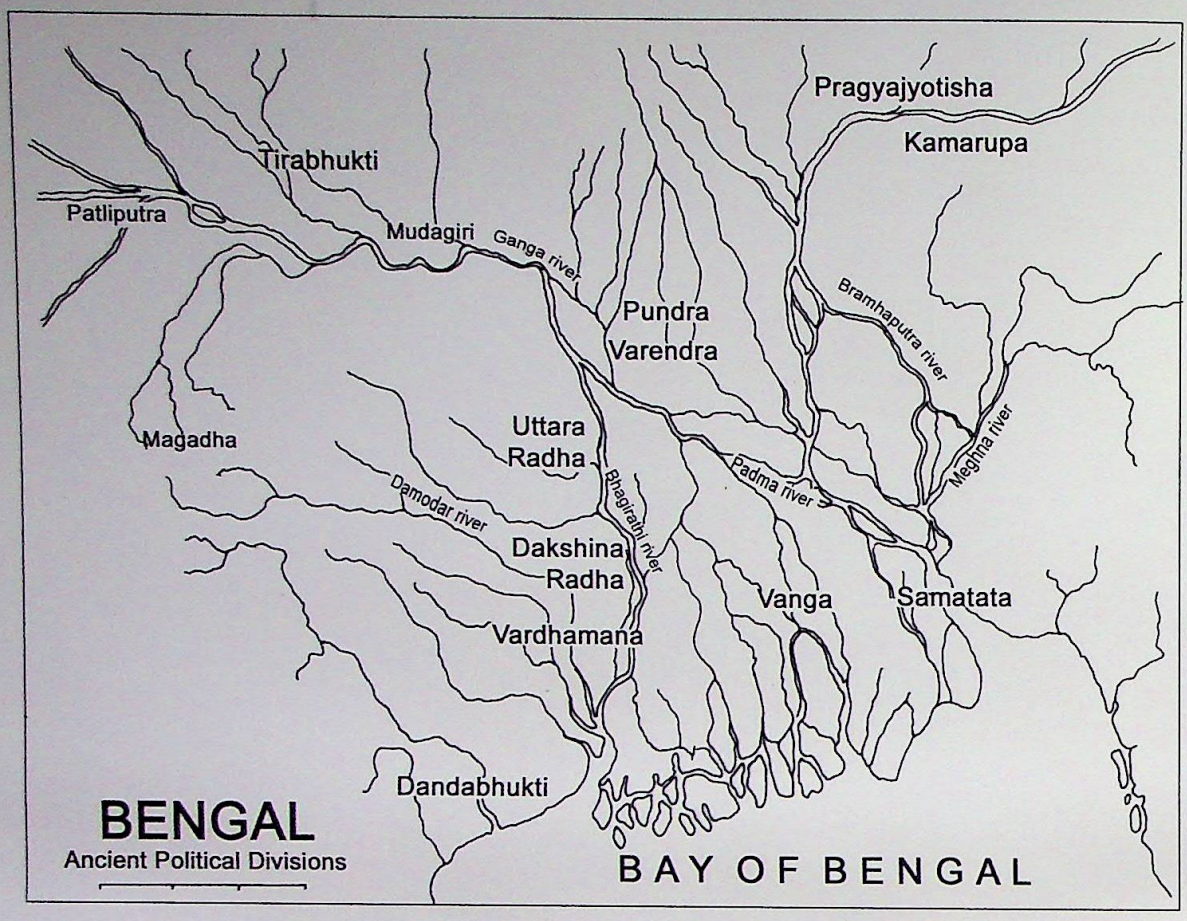

Map 2: Ancient Political Divisions of Bengal (Source: Architecture Department, BIT, Mesra)

As a geographical entity Bengal is a flat low-lying flood plain through which the three great rivers of South Asia- the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna- pass and together with many of their tributaries deposit very fertile alluvial soil. The Himalayan and Chittagaon hill tracts bound the region on the north and east and on the south it faces the Bay of Bengal. Apart from mighty rivers, their tributaries the Padma, Damodar, Subarnarekha, Barakar, Ajoy, Rupnarayan, Teesta, Kartoya, Madhumati and the Kansai have remained the lifelines of the region and also defined the cultural sub-regions forming many secondary states in the later course of history (map 1 and 2).

Pre-Pala History of Bengal and Bihar

From about the sixth century BCE Indo–Aryan settlers began moving down the Gangetic plain towards the Bengal region. They brought with them the concepts of agriculture and Brahmanism. In the process the non–Aryan hunters, fishermen and primitive peasants already inhabiting the densely forested Bengal delta began to be absorbed into the agrarian society stratified on the lines of Brahmanism. Meanwhile the presence of Magadha, the present central Bihar, was felt in the all India political scene during the reign of Bimbisara (543–493 BCE) and was destined to become the imperial center in the long run. Magadha, one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas[1] of the time, with earlier Rajgriha and later Pataliputra as its capitals became the leading state in northern India under Ajatshatru (493–461 BCE), successor of Bimbisara. Bengal gradually came under the influence of Aryan culture in the fourth century BCE and the Brahmi inscription from Mahasthangarh, Bogra district, unmistakably

[1] Aryavarta or India was divided into sixteen cultural regions known as Mahajanapada from Mauryan history. Matsya and Gandhara are other two famous ones with Magadha.

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proved that north Bengal, then known as Pundravardhana, formed part of the vast Mauryan empire.[2] The rise of an imperial state in eastern India coincided with the rise of Buddhism, which from the third century BCE during the reign of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka (273–236 BCE) was the dominant state religion in India. Between the fall of the Mauryas and the foundation of the Gupta dynasty nothing definite is known about the history of Bengal but the recent archaeological findings at Chandraketugarh in district Twenty-four Parganas and Mangalkot in Burdwan district suggest that it might have formed a part of Magadha.

The death of Sasanka was followed by a period of chaos and confusion and a series of invasions which led to the political disintegration of Gauda and Magadha ultimately making room for the Palas to step in.

With the establishment of Gupta domination in northern India as a paramount power and its extension towards the east, almost whole of the Bengal region was incorporated in the imperial fabric during the reigns of Samudragupta and Chandragupta II (c. 376–413 CE). At the beginning of the sixth century, the Gupta Empire began to disintegrate. Vainyagupta, a scion of the family, established an independent kingdom in eastern Bengal and Samatata[3] in the trans Meghna region became a part of his kingdom. By the middle of the sixth century over the ruins of Gupta empire in Bengal arose the independent kingdoms of Vanga[4] and Gauda.[5]

Sasanka, who probably began his career as a subordinate ruler under a later Gupta king came to the limelight in the early seventh century. Taking full advantage of the decline of the later Guptas, he established a powerful kingdom in northern and western Bengal with Karnasuvarna in Murshidabad district as his capital and also brought Magadha under his sway. This brought him in conflict with Harshavardhana of Kannauj and Bhaskarvarmana of Kamarupa (Assam). Sasanka was a staunch Saivite and known opponent of Buddhism, but could keep his dominions intact until his death, shortly before 637 CE. At some point of time his influence reached up to Ganjam district in Andhra Pradesh across Orissa. He is said to have caused much disruption to Buddhist establishments and is credited with founding the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar.[6]

Pala Period in Bengal and Bihar

The death of Sasanka was followed by a period of chaos and confusion and a series of invasions which led to the political disintegration of Gauda and Magadha ultimately making room for the Palas to step in. The political situation and the psychological climate of the day is reflected in an early Pala record, the Khalimpur copper plate inscription[7] of king Dharmapala (c. 766–808 CE), in which it is stated that Gopala (c. 739–766 CE) was made king by the people (Prakriti) to take the hand of fortune and put an end to *Matsyanyaya*.[8] Gopala rose to power in Varendra[9] in about 741 CE and he gradually brought almost all parts of Bengal as well as

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[2] For the general history of the region see Majumdar, R. C., ed. *The History of Bengal*, volumes 1 & 2. Dacca, 1976.

[3] Samatata included the hilly region in the southeastern delta, corresponding to modern Comilla, Noakhali and Chittagaon districts in Bangladesh and Tripura in India.

[4] Ancient Vanga or central Bengal included the area corresponding to the modern districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Jessore, Bakarganj, Khulna, Nadia and Twenty-four Parganas.

[5] Gauda is better known as the kingdom of Sasanka with his capital at Karnasuvarna in modern Murshidabad district. Many scholars refer to Gauda as being Bengal as a whole.

[6] Mitra, Debala. *Bhubaneswar*, Archaeological Survey of India, N. Delhi, 1978, p.11

[7] From *Epigraphia Indica*, IV, 4 by F. Kielhorn, pp.248, 251

[8] The practice of fishes in which larger fishes swallow the smaller ones.

[9] Varendra was ancient cultural sub-region in Bengal situated in the northwestern delta north of Ganges river and included the territories now constituting the districts of Malda, Pabna, Rajshahi, Bogra, Dinajpur and Rangpur.

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Magadha under his sway. He was a fervent Buddhist and credited to have revived the faith after it suffered by the hands of Sasanka. His rule ended around 766 CE.

Dharmapala (c. 766–808 CE) the son and successor of Gopala, inherited an apparently well–knit kingdom and ventured for an expansion of the Pala imperialism towards the west. The Khalimpur copper plate inscription of Dharmapala referred above, for example, attests to his overlordship over a large portion of India when it states that the rulers of north Indian states Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhara and Kira assembled at the imperial durbar held at Kannauj under Dharmapala. Himself a devout Buddhist, he is said to have patronized the construction of two monumental Buddhist shrine-monastery complexes[10] – Vikramshila in eastern Bihar, and Paharpur in Rajshahi district and supported the earlier Buddhist institutions of Bengal and Bihar at Nalanda, Odantpuri, Rajgir, Bodhgaya, Jagaddalpur and Tamrilipti.

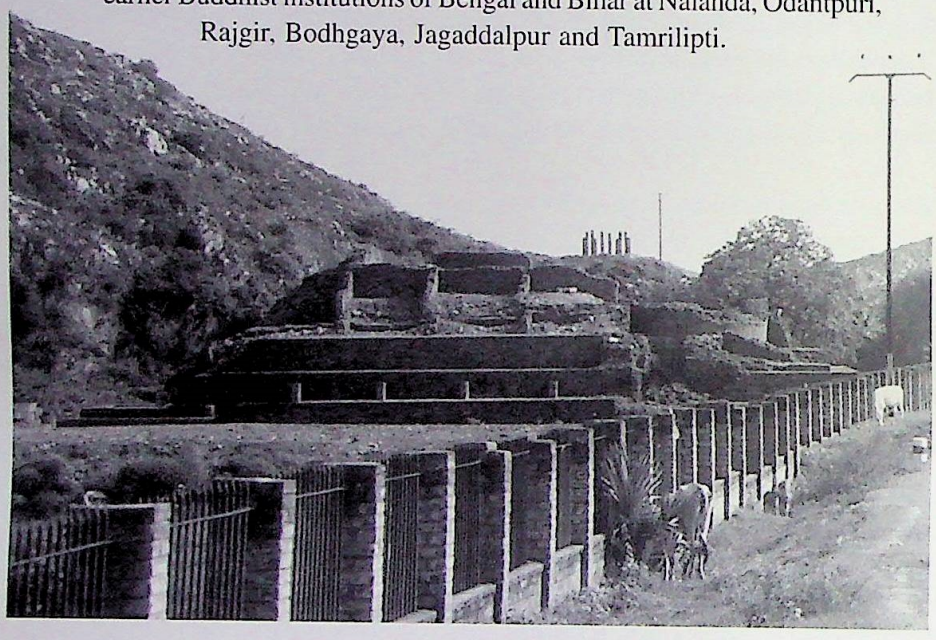

Fig.2.1: A recently unearthed Buddhist Vihara, Rajgriha, late-Gupta or early Pala period.

Devapala, whose reign has been regarded as the high watermark of Pala imperialism, succeeded his father Dharmapala in about 808 CE. He ruled up to about 845 CE over an extensive empire. Assisted by his cousin and general Jayapala and the family of able ministers, he extended his sway over Assam and Orissa. After Devapala the Pala Empire faced decadence under frequently changing rulers. The next significant reign was of Narayanpala (c. 877–931 CE) under whom the Empire was limited to Magadha and north Bengal. The sorry state of affairs was put to an end by Mahipala I (c. 980–1028 CE), the son of Vigrahapala II around 980 CE. The records of his reign clearly indicate his success in restoring the fallen fortunes of his family and also the expansion of the Pala dominion in northern and western Bengal and northern Orissa.

The reign of Mahaipala I came to an end around 1028 CE and under the next two successive Pala kings, Nayapala (c. 1028–1043 CE) and Vigrahapala III (c. 1043–1069 CE), the royal authority was sufficiently weakened in eastern India and southern Bengal, though Magadha was in its full grip.[11]

[10] For detailed description of these monasteries see- Asher, F. M.*The Art of Eastern India, 300 – 800*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1980, pp.91-94.

[11] Bagchi, Jhunu. *The History and Culture of the Palas of Bengal and Bihar, 750-1200*. New Delhi, 1993, pp. 36-55.

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The death of Vigrahapala III saw a scramble for the throne and later revolt of the Kaivartas from present Kalna region of the Burdwan district who captured the Varendra region from the Palas. Rampala ascended the throne in around 1073 CE and with the help of his allies of the smaller secondary states, whom he astutely gathered round him, he recovered his paternal kingdom by defeating Kaivartas. In his recently retrieved Varendra region Ramapala established his new capital at Ramavati, which is said to be near Hazrat Pandua in Malda district.[12] The Varman kings of east Bengal eventually submitted to him and the rulers of Orissa (Utkal and Kalinga) and Kamarupa followed suit. Ramapala gave a fresh lease of life to his decaying kingdom but after his death in 1126 CE, the decline of his kingdom started and after 1175 CE only nominal rulers of Pala dynasty ruled over parts of Magadha.

Fig.2.2: One of the many re-used simple post and lintel doorways of earlier Hindu Buddhist structures, Adina Mosque, Pandua.

By the above description it is observed that the Pala dynasty ruled over an extensive region of eastern India for more than four centuries and during the reign of its two celebrated members, Dharmapala and Devapala, the empire reached the zenith of power, prestige and glory. Mahipala I and Rampala arrested the process of its decline. The peace, prosperity and political stability which the four–century long Pala rule gave to the ancient Gauda and Magadha fostered an all-round cultural development, and in particular set a new trend in the creative areas of architecture, sculpture and paintings. During the Pala period, Buddhism as a state cult spread into neighbouring lands – in particular to Tibet, Burma, Cambodia, and Java- where monumental Buddhist shrines appear to have been modeled on prototypes developed in Bengal and Bihar.[13] At the same time, Pala control over Magadha, the land of the historical Buddha, served to enhance that dynasty's prestige as the supreme patrons of the Buddhist religion. But by the eleventh century the Palas had begun favouring the cults of the Hindu religion – Shiva and Vishnu are evident in the artistic records of this period.[14]

Sena Period in Bengal and Bihar

During the waning phase of Pala political authority a family with the names of its members ending in Sena was rising in power. The manner in which the Sena dynasty established itself as a ruling power after the Palas is not very clear. Of Kshatriya origin, the Senas came from Karnataka region and brought a fierce devotion to Hindu culture. The earliest of the line of Senas is Samantasena (c. 1060–1080 CE),

[12] No clear evidence of Ramavati's location is known yet but some ongoing researches faintly suggest Hazrat Pandua to be the possible site of Ramavati.

[13] Pagan temples described in a chapter in Saraswati, Sarasi K. *Architecture of Bengal.* Calcutta: G. Bhardwaj 1976, pp. 123-160, and the article by Haroun, Rashid. "Some Possible influences from Bengal and Bihar on Early Angkor Art and Literature," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh,* 22, no.1 (April, 1977): 9-19.

[14] Huntington, Susan L. *The "Pala – Sena" Schools of Sculpture.* Leiden: Brill, 1984.

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who supposedly settled on the banks of Ganges in the Radha[15] country and was feudatory of the Pala king Vigrahapala III (c. 1043–1069 CE). The grandson of Samantasena, called Vijayasena (c. 1096–1159 CE) proved to be the real founder of the kingdom when he helped Ramapala in his campaign against Kaivarta rebels from north Radha country and remained an ally of the Pala king. Later he defeated the son of Ramapala and declared independence. In addition to his capital at Vijayapura, probably founded by himself, he had a second one at Vikrampura near present Dhaka in eastern Bengal.[16]

Vijayasena seems to have left for his successor, Vallalasena (c. 1159–1179 CE) an extensive trouble-free kingdom comprising virtually all of Bengal and he brought eastern Bihar and a part of Magadha under his sway. His capital was north of the present Gaur ruins in Malda district where a large compound is still called Ballalbari, probably the remains of the palace of Vallalasena.[17] The next king Lakshmanasena (c. 1179–1206 CE), the son of Vallalasena, was the last distinguished and accomplished ruler of the line. He established his capital at Lakhnauti in Malda district and ruled over almost whole Magadha and Bengal and erected sacrificial pillars at Kashi, Prayag and Puri. According to *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* by Minhaj,[18] in 1204 CE, Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji made a surprise attack on his capital and Lakshmanasena had to make his escape to eastern Bengal. He continued to rule in eastern Bengal for some time and his son Visvarupasena (c. 1206–1225 CE) ruled from Vikrampura before it was taken over by Muslims.

With the advent of the Senas, Bengali society underwent a sea change. Since the Senas had brought from the south a deep devotion to Saivism, they established everywhere in Bengal the royally sponsored Hindu cults. As a result, by the end of eleventh century, the epicentre of civilisation and power in eastern India has shifted from Bihar to Bengal, while royal patronage had shifted from a primarily Buddhist to a primarily Hindu orientation. This fact is evident by the architectural remains mainly devoted to Saivism in the Radha country where Senas initially established. During Lakshmanasena's rule Vaishnavism replaced Saivism and the Krishna and Rama *bhakti* traditions found favour by the court and the society as well. The *Gita Govindam* written by the court poet Jayadeva of Lakshmanasena's period struck a deep chord with population of Bengal. His writings in Sanskrit based *Brijbhasha* became the basis of many literary works such as *Mangal Kavya, Manas Vijaya, Krishna Mangala* and catalysed the development of 'Bangla' language.

However in north Bengal within the region of the later Pala-Sena capitals, extant monuments are hard to find, but other artistic and literary records are plenty. There are many inscriptions[19] recorded and housed in Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi in which lofty edifices built by Sena kings are described. The museum at Rajshahi also houses many architectural fragments found from the Varendra region of the period depicting magnificence of Sena architecture. The remains of the Pala-Sena period may also be found re-used in the early Islamic structures in Bengal and their study reveals a great tradition of architecture (fig.2.2).[20]

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[15] The territories on south of Ganges and west of Bhagirathi channel comprising of parts of present Birbhum, Burdwan, Bankura and Hooghly districts.

[16] Bandyopadhyay, Sudipa. *Architectural Motifs on Eastern Art,* R. N. Bhattacharya, Kolkata, 2002. p. 42.

[17] Ballalbari is irregular square of one mile each side on north of Gaur. The enclosure is surrounded by a gigantic embankment with moat on both sides.

[18] Minhaj-ud-Din, Maulana. *Tabaqat-I-Nasiri: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan (810-1260).* trans. H. G. Raverty (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1881) 1, pp. 557-58.

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Secondary States

The extant monuments belonging to the Pala and Sena periods surviving in the parts of west Bengal and on the eastern fringes of Chhotanagpur plateau suggest a system of secondary state formations in these areas by landholders.[21] Eastern India, being agrarian in nature was divided in smaller landholding states where people used to work for a local chieftain and paid him the state revenue. In turn the chieftains provided the working class protection and safety of their possessions. This system was in place when the first Pala king, Gopala was elected by the consensus of the people and the feudatory chieftains. The importance of feudatory chieftains was again underlined when Rampala could secure his lost kingdom with the help of his many allies in 1073 CE.

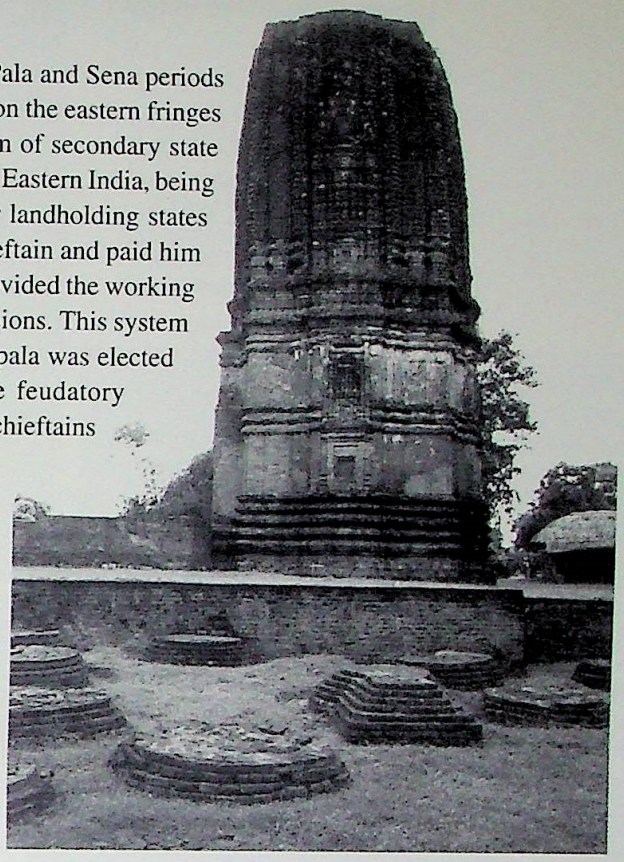

Fig.2.3: Mallabhum, a secondary state of Pala-Sena empire in present Bankura district has the best of surviving temples, Siddhesvara Mahadeva temple, Bahulara, Bankura.

Regrettably the historical evidence is not very specific but wherever we find extant Hindu temples of the Pala and Sena period we are able to get some information about the patrons. In Manbhum area in present Purulia district, where we find the largest number of Hindu temples at Telkupi, Banda, Para, Pakbira and Boram, we may observe the growth of ancient Panchakot State in the region, which was the part of Sekharbhum, the land ruled by Shikhara dynasty with their capital at Tailakampi or Telkupi.[22] Similarly, Mallabhum, in the vicinity of present Bishnupur in Bankura district, had Malla dynasty ruling for a long time. Here we find the best examples of the period at Bahulara (fig.2.3), Dihar, Sonatapal and at Bankura all devoted to Saivism. The Sadgop kings ruled in the Gopabhum region of the Burdwan district where we see temples at Barakar, Deuliya and on the banks of the river Ajay. Except Purulia, the above areas with Shiva temples formed part of the Radha country, the region of early Sena influence. Singhbhum and Panchpargana in Ranchi district also have remains of the Pala period where the kings of Ichagarh exercised power over the Chhotanagpur plateau.

The location of these remains are also linked with the river systems of the Damodar and the Suvarnarekha and possibly also with the link route of Varanasi to Puri in Orissa. These areas of the west and south Bengal, where we find extant temples, have been culturally and physically linked with Orissa since Sasanka's period in the early seventh century. The architectural character of the temples also shows Orissan influence apart from many Magadhan traits discussed in detail in the coming chapters.

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[19] Majumdar, Nani Gopal. *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol.3, Rajshahi: Varendra Research Society, 1929, pp. 52-53.
[20] Discussed in detail in chapter six and seven of this study.
[21] Chakrabarti, Dilip K.
Archaeology of Eastern India: Chhotanagpur plateau and West Bengal. New Delhi, 1993. p. 211.
[22] Mitra, Debala. *Telkupi: A Submerged Temple Site in West Bengal*, Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 76. N. Delhi. 1969, p. 1.

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Islamic Conquest of Bengal

After the Islamic conquest of Bengal in the year 1204 CE by Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad bin Bakhtyar, he established his seat of government at Gaur or Lakshmanvati or Lakhnauti, the capital city of the last Hindu king of Bengal, Lakshmanasena. Minhaj-ud-din,[23] the author of the *'Tabaqat-I-Nasiri'* mentions that Ikhtiyar-ud-din himself established at Lakhnauti a few mosques, schools, rest houses and monasteries. Earlier Islamic rulers of thirteenth century Bengal were the governors appointed by the Delhi Sultans and they aimed at communicating a message of brute force to the native population. Many earlier structures were dismantled for building material and innumerable images of Hindu deities were thrown into rivers and tanks. In the year 1204-5 CE, Bakhtiyar himself struck a gold coin in the name of his overlord in Delhi, depicting a Turkish cavalryman with the phrase *Gauda vijaye*, "on the conquest of Gaur" (i.e. Bengal). It was inscribed in Sanskrit giving a message to the conquered Bengalis in their language. The monuments of the period also conveyed the authority of Islam over the native population. Notable in this respect is the tower at Chhota Pandua in Hooghly district, which served the political purpose of announcing victory over a conquered people.

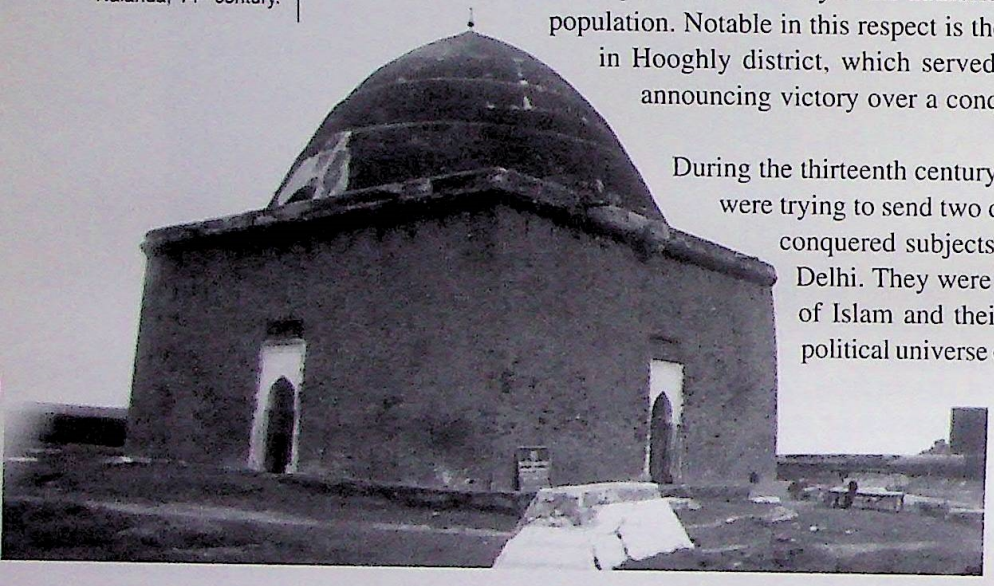

Fig.2.4: The earliest square, single dome tomb in eastern India was built in the heart of Buddhist region at Biharsharif, Tomb of Ibrahim Bayyu, Nalanda, 14th century.

During the thirteenth century, the governors of Bengal were trying to send two different messages to their conquered subjects and to their overlords in Delhi. They were projecting the superiority of Islam and their own place in the larger political universe of Islam to their conquered subjects and to their overlords in Delhi, they were trying to assert their independence. During the thirteenth century, Delhi Sultans suppressed many revolts by their governors but later they became exasperated and indifferent towards Bengal. It is said that Alauddin Khalji used to send all the thieves caught in Delhi to be released in Bengal which shows his desperation with the delta.[24]

During the rule of the Delhi Sultanate over Bengal as a province, a major change in the landscape of Bengal occurred with the establishment of many mint towns and regional capitals such as Lakhnauti or Gaur, Sonargaon near Vikrampura, Satgaon near Tribeni and later Hazrat Pandua north of Gaur. Rural Bengal was experiencing the foundation of many urban centers where vibrant Islamic culture flourished with the coming of soldiers, scholars, administrators, artisans and clerics. Islam attracted many working classes to towns otherwise suppressed in Brahmanical society as *'shudras'*. The new urban centres of Bengal generated a lot of building activity in the form of mosques, tombs, *madrassas* and *serais*, but remained confined to only these Islamic towns.

[23] Minhaj, 1881, 1, pp. 557-58.
[24] Rahim, A. *Social and Cultural History of Bengal.* Karachi, 1967. p. 76.

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Fig.2.5 & 2.6: Terracotta art revived by muslims reached its zenith in brick temples built during Mughal period with vaishnavite subjects carved on plaques, Ramchandra temple, Guptipara, Hooghly.

Independent Sultanate of Bengal

In 1342 CE a powerful noble Shams-al-Din Ilyas Shah (1342–1357 CE) established the first of several dynasties that remained independent from north India for the next two and half centuries. Independence from Delhi was marked by the shift of the Ilyas Shahi capital from Lakhnauti, to the new site of Pandua, located some twenty miles to the north suspected to be the site of Ramavati, the capital of Rampala and in the early fourteenth century a seat of Sufi learning. In addition to resisting repeated invasions from Delhi, Ilyas Shah defeated a host of neighbouring Hindu kings, namely those of Champaran, Tirhut (north–west Bihar), Kathmandu, Jajnagar (north Orissa), and Kamrupa.

The most spectacular evidence of the dynasty's imperial pretensions is seen in the famous Adina mosque, completed in 1375 CE in the Ilyas Shahi capital of Hazrat Pandua built by the founder's son and successor, Sultan Sikandar. This imposing monument, greater in size than any edifice built by Delhi Sultans, projects the claim of Sultan Sikandar Shah for power and independence. In their independence, Ilyas Shahi Sultans adopted religious orthodoxy reflected in their coinage, inscriptions and monuments.[25]

By the early fifteenth century powerful Bengali nobles of the region started feeling uneasy by the alien culture of religious orthodoxy imposed on them and their political support for the Sultanate dwindled. Here again the importance of secondary states in the politics of Bengal was underlined, with whose support the Sultanate was

[25] For the inscriptions on Adina mosque and depiction of Sura of light in the mihrab niche of Adina mosque see Banerji Naseem A. "Connection between the Koranic Sura of light, Sufi light mysticism, and the motif of the Lamp within a niche". *Marg 50*, no.3 1999, pp. 69-81. It also informs us about the inscriptions on the walls of the mosque in which the builder claims to make Adina focal point of worship, a center of the Islamic world.

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installed and run. This led to the rise of Raja Ganesh (c. 1400–1421 CE), a Hindu landholder who acquired power and dominion over the territory around Gaur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Murshidabad. This in turn provoked a crisis of confidence among the Sufi elite of the time based at Hazrat Pandua. These tensions were partially resolved by the conversion of Raja Ganesh's son, Sultan Jalal-ud-Din (c.1415–1432 CE) and then he was allowed to occupy the throne as Sultan. This converted son of Raja Ganesh attempted to patronize each of the kingdom's principal constituents – Muslims, Sufis of the Chishti order, and native devotees of the Goddess and also patronized Sanskritic culture.[26]

From the reign of the son of the soil, Sultan Jalal-ud-Din, architectural traditions of the Middle East and north India were abandoned and the architecture of Bengal adopted indigenous forms. The Eklakhi mausoleum built in 1425 CE in Pandua, believed to be the Sultan's own mausoleum, became the prototype for the subsequent Bengali-style mosque. In the Eklakhi tomb, we find all the hallmarks of the new style: a square plan modeled on the earlier Buddhist temples; base mouldings as seen on the Adina mosque modeled on temple base mouldings; the wall treatment developed on the Pala-Sena tradition; use of brick and terracotta decorations revived during early Islamic period; engaged corner towers and curved cornice.[27] The latter feature, taken from the curved roofs and eaves of thatched huts of bamboo frames, was translated in brick in the Eklakhi tomb (1425 CE) for the first time. Thereafter until the end of the Sultanate, the curved cornice became an essential ingredient of the architecture in Bengal.

The period of Raja Ganesh and his converted son Sultan Jalal-ud-Din was a turning point in Bengali history. It paved the way for the inclusion of Bengali Hindus in the government and exercise considerable autonomy in landholding on behalf of the Sultanate, which is evident in the continued flourishing of the smaller secondary states in west and south Bengal. There was a change in the style of royal culture also when efforts were made to express the Islamic institutions in locally familiar terms, as seen in architecture and the use of Bengali language for official works. It was during the restored Ilyas Shahi dynasty rule (1433–1486 CE) after the death of Raja Ganesh's son, that a uniquely Bengali Muslim culture flourished and, this continued also during the rule of Husain Shahi dynasty (1493– 1538 CE). Put more precisely, the independent sultans of this period permitted Bengali culture, whether expressed in architecture, religion, language and literature to flourish and combine with Islamic styles and influences.

The adoption of the Eklakhi tomb architecture for the majority of mosques built in this period shows a concern for presenting Islam in a language within the architectural experience of the common Bengali folk for whom they were intended. Even the structures of monumental scale in Gaur like the Dakhil Darwaza adopted the main features of the Eklakhi tomb and the rectangular mosques such as the Tantipara and the Chhota Sona also have all the architectural features similar to the prevailing style. The Qadam Rasul structure built in the early sixteenth century housing footprints of the Prophet Mohammad, built in the same style at Gaur, shows another aspect of the continuity of eastern Indian traditions, earlier seen in the worship of footprints of Lord Vishnu in the Vishnu Pad temple at Gaya and the footprints of Buddha at Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya.

[26] Eaton, Richard M. "Islam in Bengal", *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris 1984, p. 28.
[27] For detailed discussion please see chapter seven about Islamic architecture.

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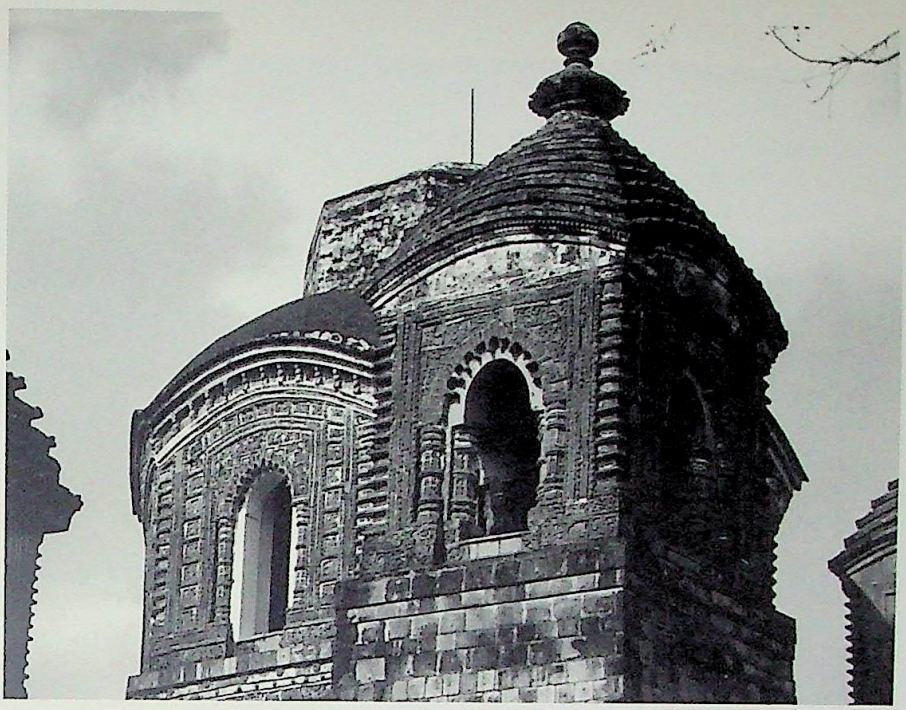

Fig. 2.7: *Ratna* temples with miniature *latina* aedicules, Shyam Raya temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.

During the Husain Shahi dynasty the court at Gaur supported the writing of important Bengali works such as *Manasa-Vijaya, Manasa-Mangala, Krishna Mangala* and translations into Bengali from Sanskrit of the *Mahabharata*.[28] This literature mainly reflected the Vaishnavite *bhakti* movement that in Bengal can be traced to the writings of Jayadeva, the court poet of Lakshmanasena. Displaying the continuity of traditions, in the early sixteenth century, this movement reached a high point in its development under the influence of the great saint Chaitanya (1486–1533 CE) and found expression in large number of Vaishnavite temples built in the smaller states of landholders and Hindu kings (fig.2.5-2.7).

Mughal Period and Hindu Renaissance

During the Husain Shahi dynasty rule (1493–1538 CE) and the later brief period of Afghan rule from Gaur, some changes in Bengal's ecological system are observed. The most important change was the gradual eastward migration of the Ganges River from its old channel through the Bhagirathi-Hooghly system in western Bengal, into eastward channels. Finally, by the middle of sixteenth century, the Ganges has linked up with the Padma[29], which carried the great river's main channel into the heart of eastern Bengal.[30] This coincided with the shift of the capital of Bengal from Gaur to Tanda to the southwest of Gaur by Sulaiman Karrani, the ruler of Bihar who ruled Bengal for a brief period after 1564 CE. After the Mughal conquest of Bengal, Munim Khan, the triumphant general of Emperor Akbar, was charmed by the beauty of Gaur and shifted the capital back to Gaur from Tanda. Due to the shifting of the main channel of Ganges from the banks of Gaur, the town became unhealthy and after a dreadful pestilence that killed thousands including Munim Khan, Gaur was abandoned as the capital of Bengal in 1575 CE.

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[28] Sarkar, Jadunath.
The History of Bengal: Muslim Period, 1200-1757, Patna, Janaki Prakashan, 1977, 217-230.

[29] Now in Bangladesh. Ganges is called Padma in Bangladesh by the name of the river with which Ganges merged in the sixteenth century.

[30] Bhattacharya, N.D. "Changing courses of Padma and Human Settlements",
National Geographic Journal of India, vol. 24, nos. 1&2, March-June, 1978, pp.63-65.

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After the complete Mughal conquest of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1578 CE, first Raja Todarmall and then Raja Mansingh of Amer in Rajasthan were appointed governors of Bengal. Raja Todarmall worked from Tanda but Raja Mansingh founded a new capital of Bengal at Rajmahal,[31] further south of Tanda but on higher ground. These Hindu governors of the Mughal Empire prevailed upon Hindu landholders to remain loyal to the Mughal court and gave considerable freedom to them in their states. This was the high point of Bengali Vaishnavism and many landholders such as the Mallas of Vishnupur, Samantas of Samantbhum and Gops of Gopbhum were attracted towards Vaishnavism. Raja Mansingh, himself a devotee of Lord Krishna, helped and encouraged many Vaishnavite activities and Vrindavan near Mathura in his state was revived with Bengali Vaishnavism. This period is mentioned as the 'pauranic renaissance' by Dinesh Chandra Sen quoted by McCutchion.[32] After Mansingh's period in 1612 CE, Mughal governor Islam Khan shifted the capital of Bengal to Jahangirnagar, the present Dhaka, on south of Sonargaon. The shift was necessary to control the Mughal Empire on the eastern frontiers of Chittagaon, Harikela and Samatata. Hence, the centre of Muslim power shifted eastwards leaving western Bengal open to a flurry of religious activities evident in the field of temple building. Mughal practices opposed religious conversions[33] and provided considerable patronage to Hindu landholders who remained loyal to Mughals and were strong enough even in the British period. The vitality of this period was reflected in the extensive temple building that started at the end of the sixteenth century in a style characterized by the temples of *Bangla, Chala* and *Ratna* types. These have their superstructure supported on arches and vaults and their formal and spatial aspects are the result of fusion of the indigenous Hindu traditions and Islamic influences. This style of temple building with many interesting variations continued till the end of the nineteenth century.¶

[31] Rajmahal is better known for the Rajmahal hills from where the black basalt used so much in Bengal art was quarried.

[32] McCutchion, David J. *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal- Origins and Classifications.* The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972. p. 1.

[33] The historical sources do not give specific information about wilful or forceful religious conversion in Bengali society but the presence of Ghazis (Religious Islamic warriors like Zafar Khan Ghazi of Tribeni) and Sufis (settled at Pandua) in Bengal since 1200CE testify the appeal of Islam amongst masses in the early Sultanate period. Eaton in *Islamic Heritage*, 1984, p.25.

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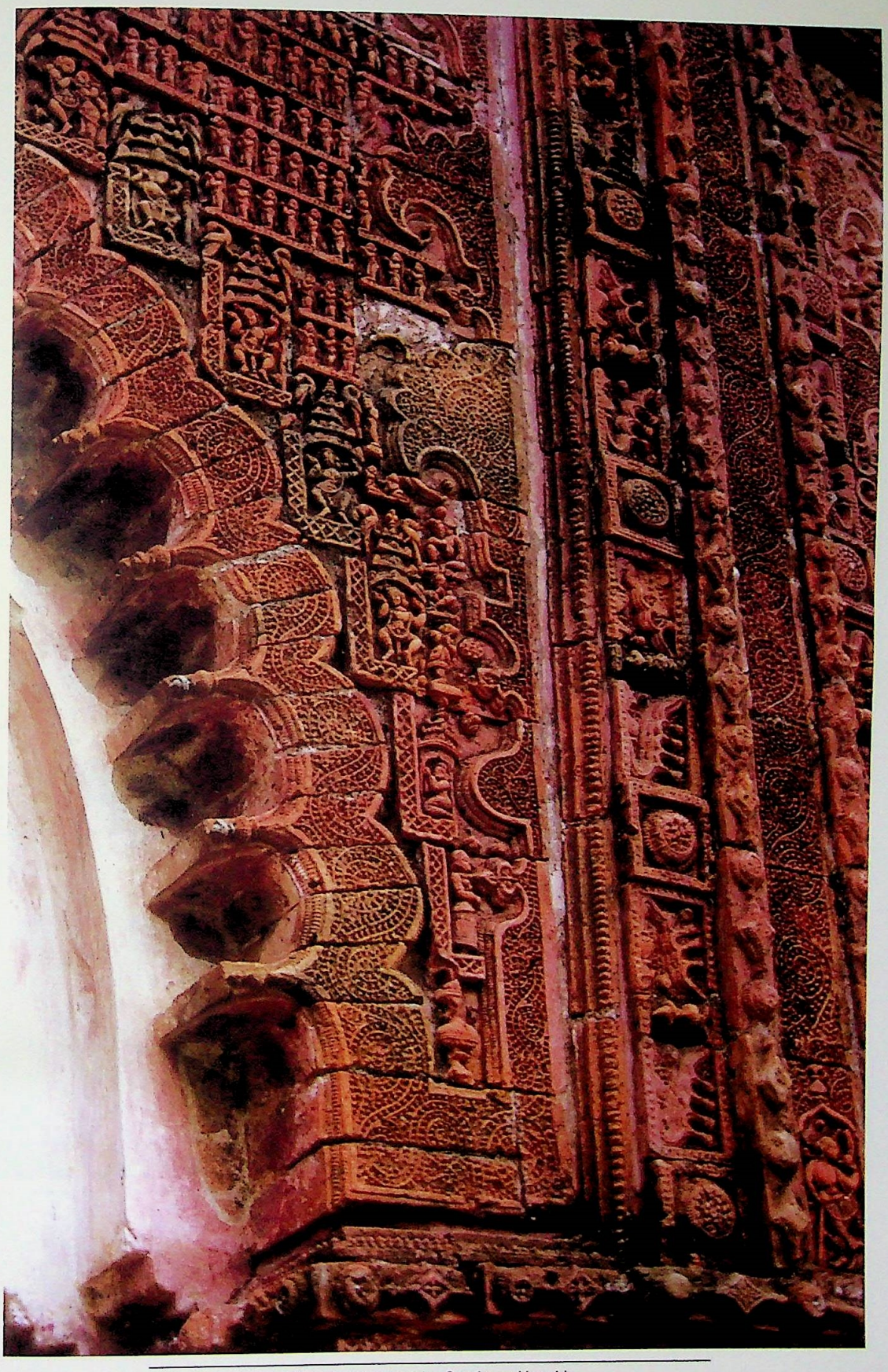

Ramchandra temple, Guptipara Hooghly

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Tomb of Ibrahim Bayyu, Nalanda

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Ramchandra temple, Guptipara Hooghly

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Siddhesvara Mahadeva temple, Bahulara, Bankura

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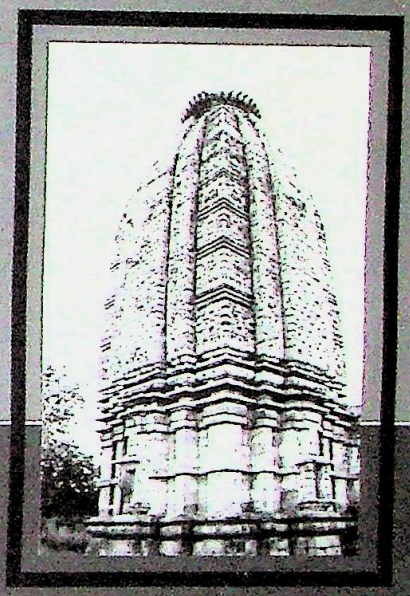

Temple Architecture

of Eastern India : early examples and sources

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After setting the geographical and historical context, now the study needs to examine the origin, sources and development of temple architecture at the start of the study period. During the fieldwork it was found that there is only one extant temple of the ninth century in Bengal which appears in the mature *latina* mode of the *nagara* tradition. However, the representation of *latina* and other temple modes was observed in many architectural fragments and votives of the period found from all parts of the study region. On the fringes of Bengal, we have some examples of the temples built in the ninth century or before and it is worthwhile to examine their influence on the later temples of Bengal. The following section first explains the modes of the *nagara* tradition of temple building and then goes on to examine the representation of the each mode in the votives and architectural fragments of the study period. The study of each mode is accompanied by the examination of their possible sources in the nearby regions of Bengal.

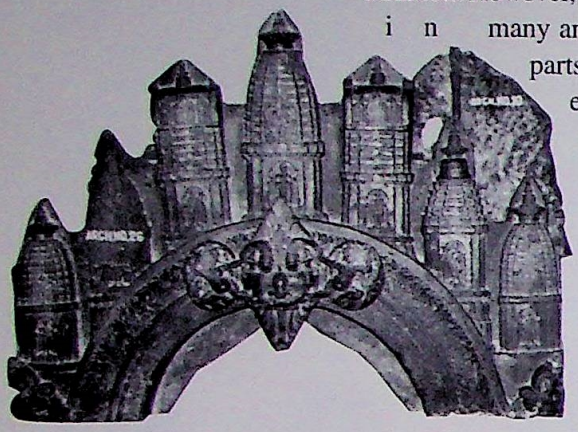

Fig 3.1: Arch-frame with *Kirtimukha*.Ranchi Museum, ninth century.

Indian temple architecture is expressed mainly in two languages, which are '*Nagara*' and '*Dravida*'[1] sometimes referred to as 'Indo-Aryan style' and 'Dravidian style'. While *Dravidian* language of temple architecture is seen only in the Indian peninsula, *Nagara* tradition is present in the northern, western and eastern parts of India. There are three modes of the *Nagara* language of temple architecture; *Latina, Valabhi*, and *Phamsana*. Adam Hardy terms the modes as organizing principle of any shrines which is also evident in Bengal where we observe types of the *latina* mode. The *latina* and *phamsana* modes are known in Bengal and Orissa in Orissan terms called *rekha* and *pidha* whereas the rare *valabhi* mode is known as *khakhara*. The early temple architecture (800-1200 CE) of Bengal finds expression mainly in *latina* mode and we do not have many surviving examples of the other two modes of the temple building from the early period (800-1200 CE). But from the architectural fragments of the Pala period, it is amply clear that *valabhi* and *phamsana* as modes of temple building were well known to the builders of Bengal.

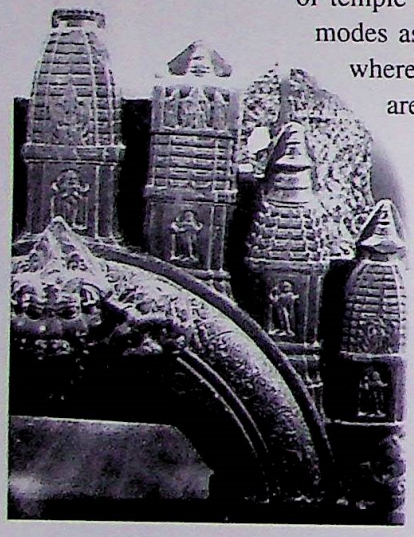

Fig 3.2: Detail of the *latina, phamsana* and *valabhi* mode shrines. Arch-frame, Ranchi Museum, ninth century.

In a circular arch frame with a *kirtimukha* at the center, the three modes of *nagara* tradition can be seen on top of the frame. This arch frame is housed in Ranchi Museum[2] and was collected from Ichagarh, a secondary state in Singhbhum district of Jharkhand (fig.3.1 and 3.2). This basalt frame probably formed the central niche of a temple of the Pala period as we can see a triangular cut within the niche formed by the arch to house an image with triangular top, a universal feature of the Pala stele.[3] The circular arch frame is crowned by a *kirtimukha* and a miniature *latina* shrine in the center. This is flanked on both sides first by *valabhi* shrines, and then by *phamsana* shrines and

[1] The use of terms 'language' for north Indian '*nagara*' tradition of temple architecture and 'modes' for three types of '*Nagara*' tradition is taken from the various writings of Adam Hardy. For a brief introduction of *nagara* tradition, see Hardy, Adam. "Sekhari Temples." *Artibus Asiae*, The Museum Rietberg, Zurich. Vol. LXII, No.1, 2002, pp. 81-137. Here Hardy mentions the use of term 'language' to be of his own preference, but it provides an explanatory framework for any architectural study. His theory of aedicular composition of the Indian temples is particularly useful to analyse Bengal temples. His two drawings are reproduced here with his kind permission (drg. 3a, 3b).

[2] As per Director of Archaeology and Museums, the arch frame with *Kirtimukha* belongs to the ninth century as per the Patna museum catalogue and was earlier housed in Patna museum.

[3] Huntington, Susan L. *The "Pala – Sena" Schools of Sculpture.* Leiden: Brill, 1984.

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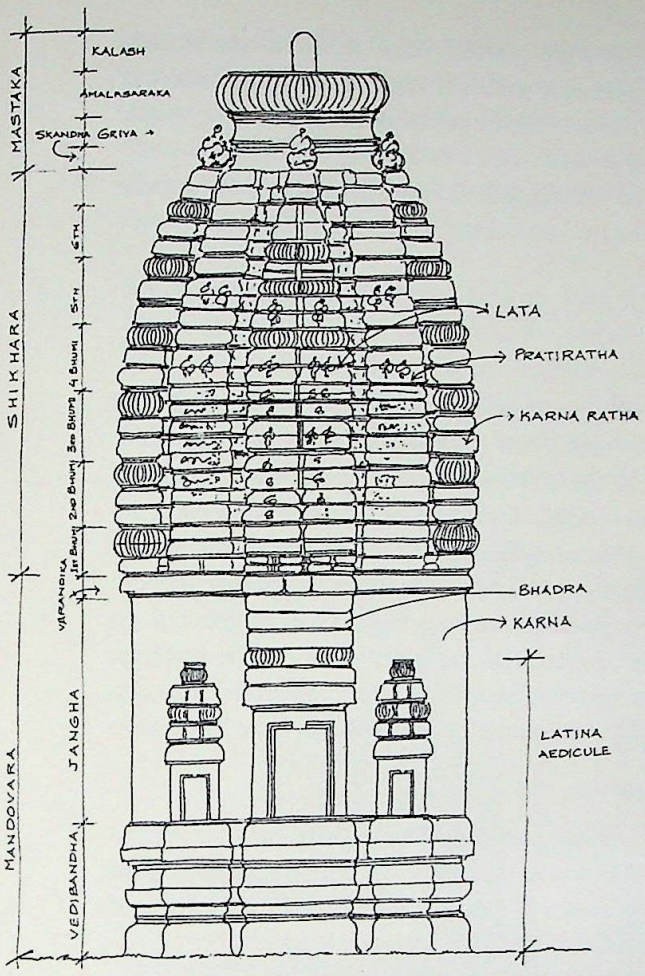
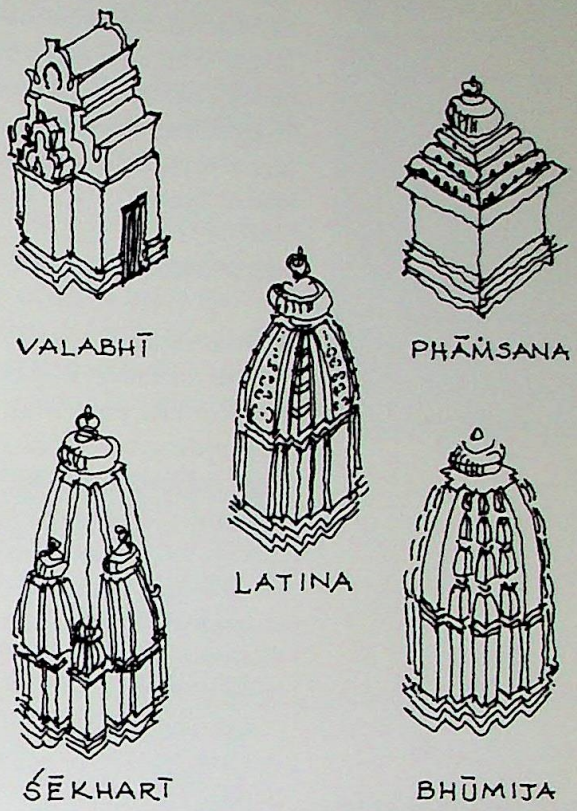
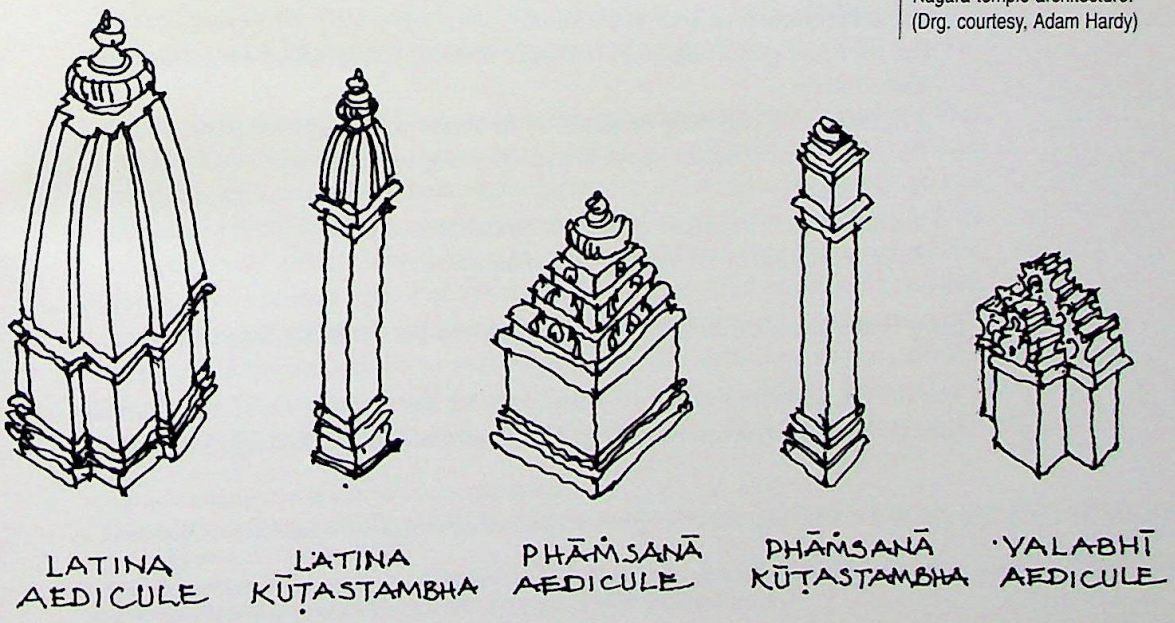


Drg. 3.1: A typical *Latina* shrine in Bengal with its various parts.



Drg. 3.A: Modes of *Nagara* temple architecture. (Drawing courtesy, Adam Hardy)

Drg. 3-B: Aedicular components of *Nagara* temple architecture. (Drg. courtesy, Adam Hardy)



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The votives, sculptures and stone tablets showing *latina* shrine were found from all parts of the study region namely Magadha, eastern Bengal, north Bengal (Varendra), suggesting the mode to be popular throughout the territory of Bengal. However, the extant temple structures in *latina* form are found only in west and south Bengal.

again by *latina* shrines at the end. The Pala characteristics of this *kirtimukha* and the arch frame, and the place of provenance makes it amply clear that builders of Bengal in the early Pala period were following the north Indian tradition of temple building and the *nagara* language with its modes was well known to them.
To appreciate the wealth of architectural heritage in the study region, it is worthwhile here to explain the modes of the *nagara* language of temple building which were used in Bengal.

Latina mode

A *latina* shrine is a single unit with a sanctum square in plan. The ground plan exhibits a number of graduated projections on each face of the square sanctum, called *rathaka* projections. If we see these projections on the walls of the temple they appear to be secondary aedicules (Aedicules can be understood as most simple, single units of *latina, valabhi* or *phamsana* modes) in the form of miniature shrines.[4] The temple of the *latina* mode is distinguished by a lofty tower (*shikhara)* over the cube of the sanctum. The *shikhara* gradually inclines inward and projections on the substructure are carried up and continued on the superstructure. The *shikhara* is surmounted by a flat and spheroid member ribbed at the edges called *amalasaraka*. The crowning element which consists of the auspicious *kalasha* may have an emblem of the divinity in the temple.

A labeled diagram explaining the various parts of a *latina* shrine may be seen as drawing no.3.1. This drawing uses Sanskrit terminology as used in the *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture*[5] and drawn as an elevation of the exterior form of the structure with the decorative elements on each part listed below:

- *Mandovara* or the vertical part below the curvilinear tower comprising of
- Base mouldings or *Vedibandha* comprising of decorative tiers, which may be *khura-kumbha, kalasha* and *kapotapali* or their combination.
- Vertical walls of the sanctum or *Jangha* with or without *rathaka* projections.
- *Varandika* or the cornice above *jangha* comprising of one or a set of many mouldings.
- *Shikhara* or the curvilinear tower consisting of
- *Bhumis* or levels of the *shikhara* marked by *bhumi amalakas* or quoin *amalakas*
- Central projection or *lata/ madhyalata*
- Recesses and projections on both sides of *madhyalata* called *pratiratha* and *karna rathas*
- *Mastaka* or the crowning elements of the shrine with following parts
- *Skandha* or the shoulder above which crowning elements sit.
- *Griva* or neck.
- *Amalasaraka* or spheroid element with indentations.
- *Stupi* or *kalasha* or the vase above *amalasaraka.*

Early Representation of the *Latina* Shrines and the Probable Sources

The votives, sculptures and stone tablets showing *latina* shrine were found from all parts of the study region namely Magadha, eastern Bengal, north Bengal (Varendra),

[4] Hardy, 2002, p. 87 and 106. Here with the help of a drawing he has explained the aedicules and aedicular components of a *latina* shrine.

[5] Meister, Michael W. ed. with M. A. Dhaky. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*. Vol. II, part 2, North India, Period of Early Maturity, New Delhi: AIIS; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991

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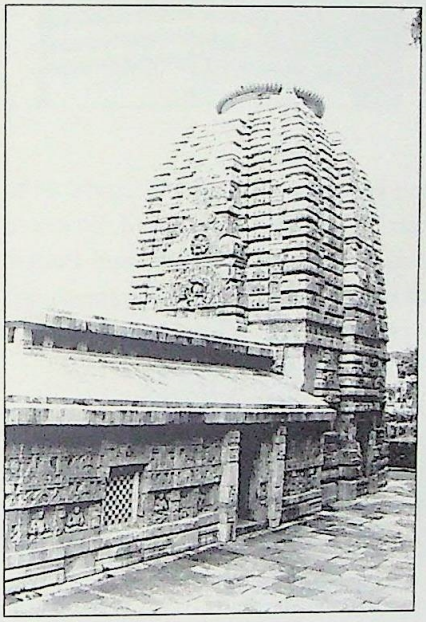
suggesting the mode to be popular throughout the territory of Bengal. However, the extant temple structures in *latina* form are found only in west and south Bengal and are studied in forthcoming chapters. In this section three *latina* temples; two from central Magadha and one from Orissa are discussed which together with some disappeared ones might have acted as sources for the *latina* temples built in the heart of Bengal.

As discussed in chapter two, Bengal was physically and culturally linked with Orissa since the time of Sasanka in the early seventh century. Many scholars have mentioned the similarity of Bengal temples with those of Orissa and in the *Grove Dictionary of Art*, Walter Smith has termed Bengal temples a provincial variant of Kalinga style.[6] It is important to note here that Orissan temples themselves were part of a larger *nagara* tradition prevalent in many parts of India. The Bengal temples



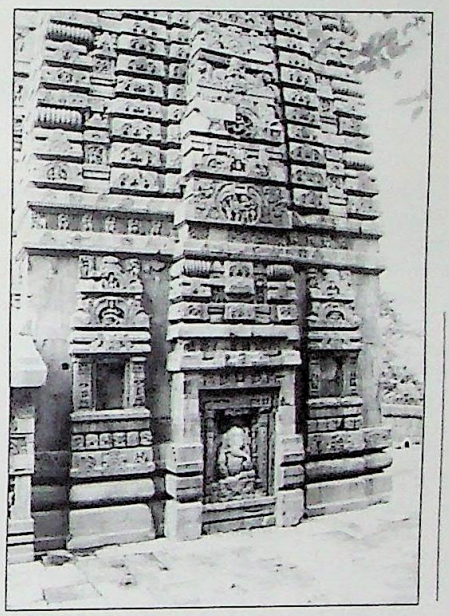


Fig. 3.3: Parashurameshvar temple, *latina* mode Bhubaneswar, seventh century.

Fig. 3.4: Secondary aedicules of *valabhi* mode, Parashurameshvar temple, Bhubaneswar, seventh century.

were also using modes of the *nagara* tradition with inputs received from central India, Magadha and Orissa examined in the following paragraphs. Magadha was, in fact, part of the Pala empire and the provenance of a large number of votives from Magadha suggest a widespread tradition from the center of artistic activity.

For the Orissan temples at Bhubaneswar the *latina* mode was most frequently used and the Parashurameshvar temple type built in the seventh century became the model for all *latina* shrines built in the region (fig.3.3 & 3.4). The ground plan of this temple is *triratha* with central *bhadra* projection with two aedicules flanking the central one. Adam Hardy[7] sees them as three bold and clear images of *valabhi* shrine. The important feature of this temple is the absence of any relation between the *shikhara's* vertical divisions with those of the *mandovara* or the sanctum wall. In the *shikhara* part *gavaksha* patterns are the main decorative feature and the *karnaratha* (in the corner) is tiered in five *bhumi* levels marked by square *bhumi amalakas*. The temple is crowned in typical *nagara* tradition by a *mastaka*

[6] Smith, Walter. "Indian sub., III, 6(i)(d):11th-16th century indigenous and traditional architecture: East, Vanga." *Grove Dictionary of Art*. London 1996. pp. 320-321.
[7] Adam Hardy in his unpublished work about Orissan temples and in a talk delivered at ACSAA Symposium Boston, 2004 titled "The Temple Architecture of Orissa: Influences and Assimilations."

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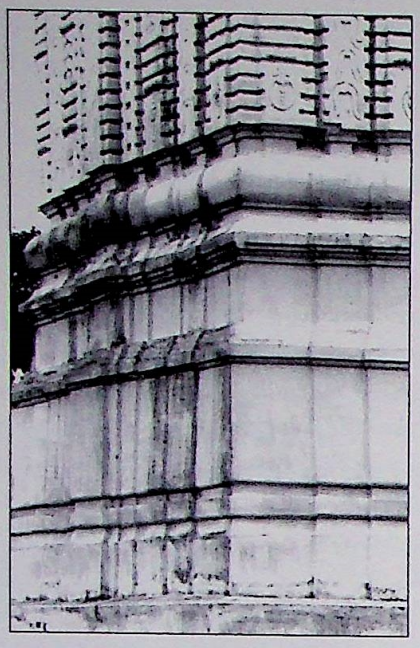

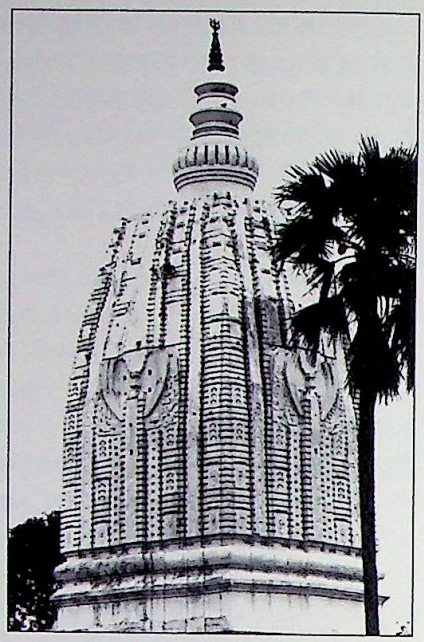

left to right
Fig. 3.5: Konchesvara Mahadev temple, *latina* mode Konch, Gaya, eighth century.

Fig. 3.6: Detail of the *mandovara*, Konchesvara temple, Konch, Gaya, eighth century.

Fig. 3.7: Detail of the *shikhara*, Konchesvara temple, Konch, Gaya, eighth century.

comprising of *skandha, griva, amalaka* and *kalasha*. The temple came to be recognized as a type in the eighth century, much later after it was built, however, five *bhumi* levels were not observed in the later temples of Orissa and Bengal where seven and nine *bhumi* levels were used more often. The Parashurameshvara temple type with its salient features was the preferred type for the votive temples found in the Bengal region.

In central Magadha, some twenty miles west of Gaya, the Koncheshwar Mahadev temple at Konch is believed to have been built in the eighth century[8] and might have exercised a great influence on the temple architecture of the region (fig. 3.5, 3.6 & 3.7). This brick-built shrine displays a heart shaped *gavaksha* on the *madhyalata* of its *shikhara*. The large *gavaksha* is crowned by a stylized *kirtimukha* and present on all the four sides of the *shikhara*. This ubiquitous heart-shaped *gavaksha* in Bengal is developed from a complex geometry of *gavaksha* within *gavaksha* and split *gavakshas* and sometimes is used in a series one above the other on the *madhyalata* of the *latina* shrines and their representations (drg. 3.2). The *shikhara* of the Konch temple is taller than the Orissan *latina* type and is not divided in *bhumis,* hence no *bhumi amalakas* are seen. The emphasis here is on verticality and even the *madhyalata* is divided in many vertical strips all decorated with intricate *gavaksha* patterns. This important temple has been restored very badly, hence, the temple is better studied through old photographs.[9]

Another group of temples in Gaya region are the shrines at Deo, Umga and Umri dedicated to Surya.[10] The stone temple at Deo is the largest and representative of the type, which might have influenced Bengal temples (fig.3.8 to 3.12). The square temple has a very bold three-tier base-moulding running around pilasters on the

[8] Beglar, J. D. and Cunningham, A. *Report of a Tour through the Bengal Provinces, Archaeological Survey of India,* volume 8, Calcutta.1878 and Reprint New Delhi. 2000. pp. 54-61.

[9] May be seen on the website of 'Temple and Legends of Bihar' by P. C. Roychoudhury. site address: www.hindutemple.org/bihar.

[10] Beglar and Cunningham, 1878, p.63. It is mentioned that Deo and Umga are two interesting places on or near the G.T. Road. They refer to the original papers in *Journal of Asiatic Society, Bengal* 1847. p. 656 and 1221 by Kittoe. Beglar himself did not visit these places and Kittoe's description could not be accessed in any library.

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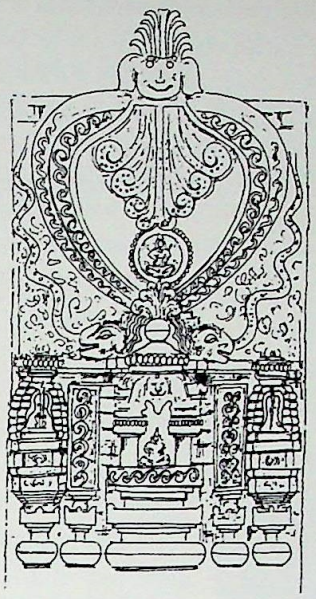
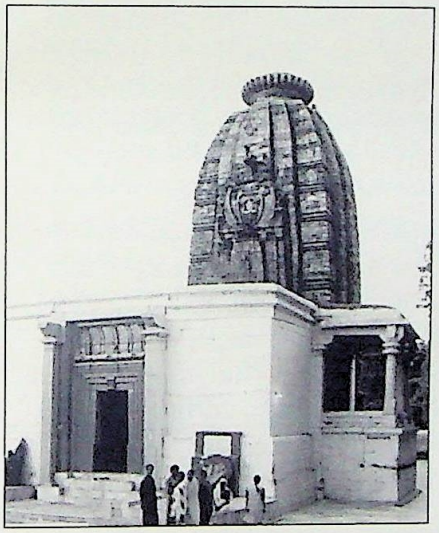
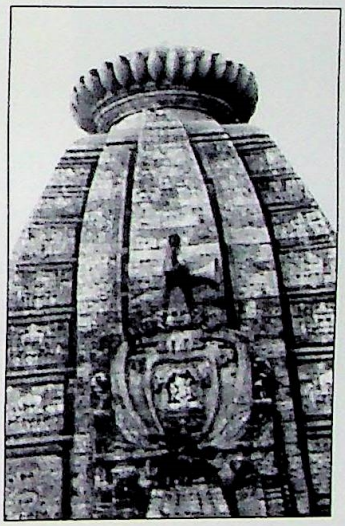


Drg. 3.2: A typical heart-shaped *Gavaksha* used on the tower of the temples in Bengal.





left to right

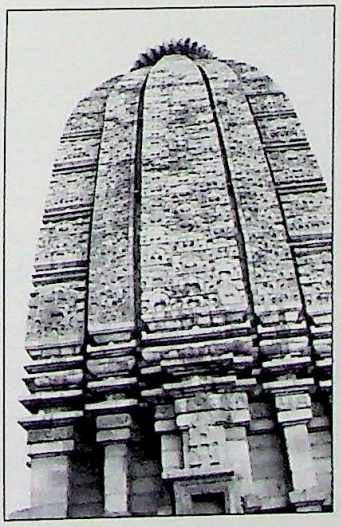
Fig. 3.8: Surya temple, *latina* mode, Deo, Aurangabad near Gaya, 8th-9th century.

Fig. 3.9: Detail of the heart shaped *gavaksha*, Surya temple, Deo, 8th-9th century.

Fig. 3.10: Detail of the *vedibandha*, *jangha* and *varandika*, Surya temple, Deo, 8th-9th century.

Fig. 3.11: Detail of the *shikhara* with low relief work, Surya temple, Deo, 8th-9th century.

Fig. 3.12: Emphasis on verticality in *shikhara*, Surya temple, Deo, 8th-9th century.



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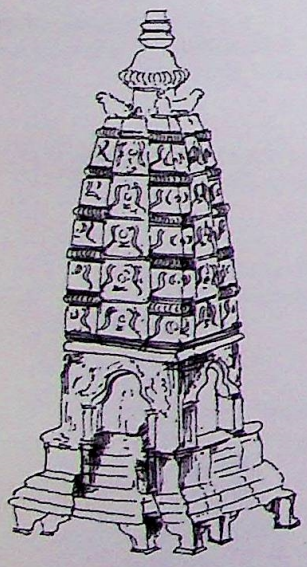
wall section and on the *bhadra* projection which has a niche for image. Adam Hardy observes many central Indian characteristics in this temple, and thus sees this as a part of the larger *nagara* tradition. Unlike the Parashurameshvara type, we see here the complete vertical integration between the *shikhara* and the sanctum wall. Seven *bhumi* levels are marked by square and thin *bhumi amalakas* on the *karnaratha* and an intricate *gavaksha* pattern decorates the *lata, pratiratha* and the *venukosha* formed on the *karnaratha*.

Fig. 3.13 Lintel of a temple doorway showing *latina* and *valabhi shikhara*, Indian Museum, Kolkata, from Magadha, 10th century.

This temple assumes great significance in the study of Bengal architecture as a unique composition of temple aedicules is placed on the front face of the temple (fig.3.9). It shows a *valabhi* aedicule superimposed on the front face of the *latina shikhara*. Over the *valabhi* aedicule a *latina* aedicule is further superimposed and this aedicular composition is crowned by a very bold heart-shaped *gavaksha* on the center of the *madhyalata* of the *shikhara*. Here this *gavaksha* is placed only on the front face and is much clearer and more intricate than the Konch temple. Another heart-shaped *gavaksha* within the larger one houses an image of Ganesha. The tall profile of the *shikhara* is further accentuated by the deep recesses between *madhyalata, pratiratha* and *karnaratha* (fig. 3.11).

The temple has a square *mandapa* with flat roof supported on tall elegant pillars. The *mandapa* is accessed through a post and lintel doorway which has a wider stone lintel above the doorway. This stone slab depicts five *latina* shrine in miniature form[11] (fig.3.8) and very similar to the black basalt lintel (fig.3.13) housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata showing the popularity of the concept. This group of Umga, Umri and Deo temples is said to be belonging to the eighth century[12] and hence might have acted as a model for the Telkupi temples with pilasters on *jangha* in Purulia district.



Drg. 3.3 A bronze votive of *latina* shrine from Jhewari, Chittagaon.

There are many examples where a *latina* shrine is represented as a single cell structure in many sculptures, architectural fragments and votives of the period housed in various museums of the study region. A few examples found from the various parts of the study region are studied to identify the characteristics of the *latina* shrine used in Bengal. Among them the Jhewari and Bangarh votives are in round and represent the full shrine whereas the *latina shikhara* shown in Tetrawan and Wari Buddha sculpture and in the basalt lintel housed in Indian Museum, Kolkata, are in relief and only the tower part is carved.

The bronze votive temple found from Jhewari in Chittagaon[13], shows a *triratha* plan (with one projection from the square of the ground plan) with *bhadra* projection

[11] The popular explanation of these five shrines mentions the five temples dedicated to Surya in the region. Umga and Umri are other two temples and some local people include Deo Barunark and Deo Markandeya temples in these five but that group in the north west is very far from this group.

[12] Beglar and Cunningham, 1878, p.54 and Bloch, T. *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey, Bengal Circle for the year ending with April 1903*. Calcutta. 1903.

[13] Saraswati, Sarasi K *Architecture of Bengal*. Calcutta: G. Bhardwaj 1976, p. 46 and plate VIII, fig. 15.

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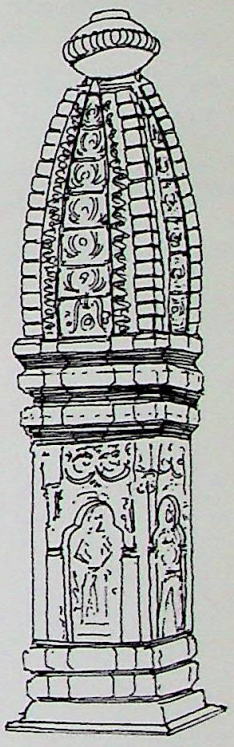
having a trefoil-arched niche housing a deity (drg.3.3). The *shikhara* is of particular interest as the *karnaratha* shows five *bhumis* and five square quoin *amalakas*. The *lata* of the votive is decorated with a series of *gavaksha* motifs forming a creeper kind *madhyalata*. The presence of lions on the top of the *skandha griva* and a bell like *amalasaraka* suggest a tenth or eleventh century date and Orissan influence for the votive, but the place of provenance is of particular significance as no remains of any *latina* shrines are found in the Chittagaon region. Archaeological excavations from nearby Comilla and Mainamati[14] have unearthed many *triratha* ground plan structures of Buddhist affiliations but whether they were surmounted by a *latina shikhara* can not be said with any certainty.

The other two votives studied do not show similar features as shown by the above votive but a relief representation on the black basalt lintel[15] kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (fig.3.13) dated from the tenth century found from north Bihar shows *triratha* projections on the *shikhara*. The *madhyalata* has improvised version of *gavaksha* pattern forming a series of heart-shaped *gavakshas* as seen on the Konch and Deo temples. The *shikhara* of the relief curves inward from the start and is not very tall unlike other representations of the period, but is surmounted by a heavy *amalaka* over the *griva*. The *karnaratha* shows three *bhumis* and square quoin *amalakas* with intricately carved *venukosha*. The *shikhara* profile of the above and the Jhewari example put them in a *latina* group different from the rest with the Parashurameshvara temple type described above.

Fig.3.14: Votive temple in *latina* mode from Rajshahi, Indian Museum, Kolkata, from the Pala period.

The following examples of the representation of the *latina* shrine may be kept in another group considering their similarities of profile and treatment of the *shikhara*. The first is a tall but broken *latina* votive kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata with *triratha* plan (fig.3.14) collected from Rajshahi. The lower *mandovara* part here is without any niche but textured to form a very minute *jali* pattern in relief. Two deep recesses in between *kapotapali* mouldings separate the tower from the sanctum below. Similar *kapotapali* mouldings show the levels in the *shikhara* but the presence of *madhyalata* gives the appearance of *latina shikhara*. The *lata* starts with a *gavaksha* pattern but does not form a series of heart-shaped *gavakshas*. Here the corner *amalakas* are also not seen.



Drg. 3.4 A stone votive of *latina* shrine from Bangarh, Dinajpur.

Another votive from Bangarh, Dinajpur[16] is further improvisation of the earlier one and presents the *latina* shrine characteristics in detail (drg.3.4). The wall or

[14] Alam, A. K. M. Shamsul. *An Album of Archaeological relics in Bangladesh*, (Bangladesh Govt.), Dhaka, 1984. p. 11.
[15] Bagchi, Jhunu. *The History and Culture of the Palas of Bengal and Bihar, 750-1200*. New Delhi, 1993. p.122 and plate 4. She mentions this lintel as an example of 'shikhara' temple.
[16] This stone votive is kept in the National Museum, Dhaka, Acc No. 1118.

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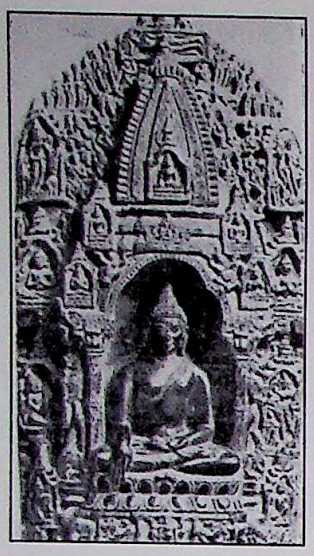

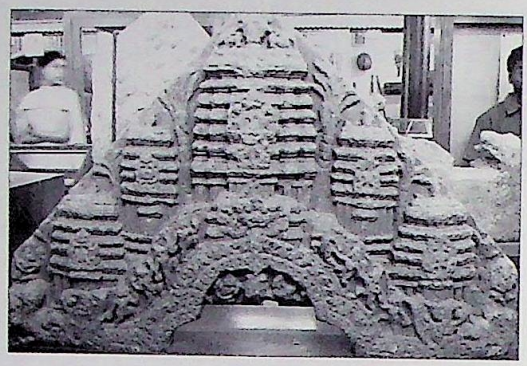

From left to right
Fig. 3.15: *Latina shikhara* crowning trefoiled arched niche, Wari Buddha, Early Pala period (source: Saraswati, 1976, pl XVII)

Fig. 3.16: *Latina shikhara* crowning trefoiled arched niche, Tetrawan Buddha, Early Pala period (source: Bandyopadhyay, 2002, fig. 16)

Fig. 3.17: A trefoil arch-frame with *latina* mode shrines, Ranchi Museum, twelfth century.

mandovara of the votive starts on a developed *vedibandha* in three tiers. The *jangha* part has a central niche on the *bhadra* projection. The beautifully carved trefoil arched niche contains a deity and is surmounted by a stylized *kirtimukha.* Three bold *kapotapali* mouldings separate the tower and the base. The *shikhara* shows a typical *madhyalata* with series of *gavaksha* motifs flanked by *pratiratha* and *karnaratha*. There are no corner *amalakas* on the *karnaratha* composed of *kapotapali* mouldings. The tall *shikhara* is crowned by a heavy *amalaka* on a slender *griva*. Three *latina* shrines represented in the arch frame of Ranchi museum are of the same type with the *jangha* having a niche for the deity on the *bhadra* projection and *madhyalata* of the *shikhara* showing *gavaksha* patterns (fig.3.1).

The two different representation of the *latina* shrine discussed above represent two different types of the *latina* temples built in Bengal, discussed in chapters four and five. The first type, which shows many Orissan characteristics, may be kept with the Parashurameshvara temple type or with the 'Barakar type' discussed in next chapter. The second tall type seems to be modeled on Konch and Deo temples, and is the preferred type in Bengal and is seen on many sculptures of the period and is discussed as 'Telkupi type' in next chapter. A Buddha image housed in a trefoil-arched niche from Wari[17] (fig.3.15) is crowned by a similar *latina shikhara* with *rathaka* projections. The Tetrawan Buddha image (fig.3.16) is also similarly crowned by an elegant *shikhara,* which has a trefoil niche for the deity at the bottom of the *madhyalata.* These, however, are included as the representation of the *shikhara shirsha bhadra* shrine classified by Saraswati.[18]

All the above representations of the *latina* shrine in two types are essentially of a single unit with no secondary aedicules represented on them as seen on the Surya temple at Deo. In fact these representations themselves may be termed as aedicules, which are represented later on extant structures.

[17] The latina shikhara carved in relief on Wari and Tetrawan Buddha images are analysed by Bandyopadhyay, Sudipa. *Architectural Motifs on Eastern Art,* R. N. Bhattacharya, Kolkata, 2002. as architectural motifs using the classification done by Saraswati, 1975. The figures are kindly provided by Bandyopadhyay.

[18] Saraswati, Sarasi K. "Rare Architectural Types in Manuscript Illustrations", *Bangladesh Lalitkala*, I.1, Bangladesh, January, 1975, pp. 1-10

[19] Description from the Ranchi Museum catalogue..

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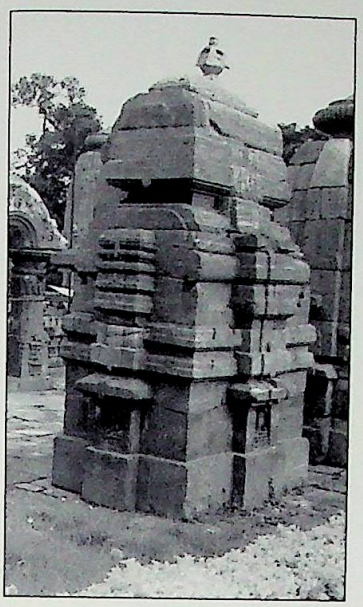

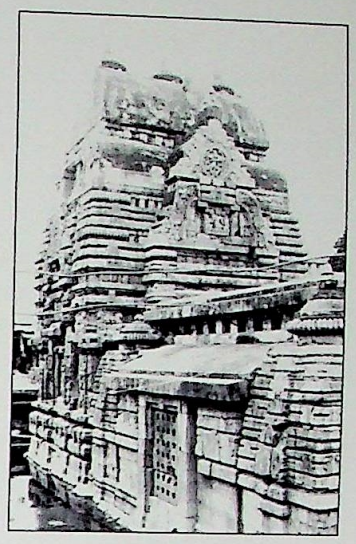

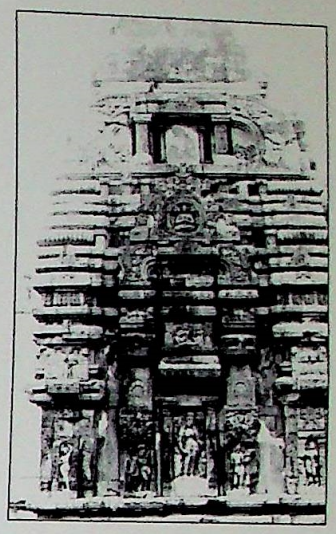

Fig. 3.18: A *valabhi* shrine in Mukteshwar temple complex, Bhubaneswar, ninth century.

Fig. 3.19: Vaital Deul, covered by barrel vaulted roof, *Valabhi* shrine, Bhubaneswar, c. 750CE.

Fig. 3.20: A *valabhi* aedicule superimposed on *valabhi* shrine, Vaital Deul, Bhubaneswar, c. 750 CE.

Before we move onto the next mode of the *nagara* language we may observe a third type of the *latina shikhara* representation on a trefoil arch frame dated from the twelfth century[19] found from Dhanbad district in Jharkhand kept at the Ranchi museum (fig.3.17). One central *latina shikhara* is flanked by two smaller ones, and at the corners are two shrines resembling *phamsana* mode. The *latina* shrines are very much influenced by the tiered mode and only the slight inward curve of the *shikhara* distinguishes them from the *phamsana* mode. These *pancharatha* shrines have very broad *skandha* and their tower is composed of eave mouldings. A *gavaksha* motif forms the *madhyalata* and together with the *bhadra* projection on the lower part, it may represent a *latina* aedicule superimposed on the *latina* shrine. These representations present a very significant stage in Bengal temple architecture when *latina* and *valabhi* aedicules started to be superimposed on the body of the temple. It is also of the significance as the *latina* mode under the influence of the *phamsana* mode shows a large number of tiered mouldings on the *shikhara* part, which is an important feature of Bengal temples from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Early Representation of the *Valabhi* Shrines and the Probable Sources

The next mode of the *nagara* language of temple building is the *valabhi* known in Orissa and Bengal as *khakhara deul*.[20] Since this shrine is mainly used for mother goddess temples or *Shakti* shrines where the goddess is represented in seven forms of *saptamatrikas* and kept in a row, this arrangement required a rectangular plan for the shrine. The *mandovara* of the shrine is similar to the *latina* shrine but *shikhara* and *mastaka* are distinguished, covered by a barrel-vaulted elongated roof. Adam Hardy[21] writes that *valabhi* is based on the principle of the *gavaksha* and its combinations which is evident in its roof details. The Vaital Deul temple at Bhubaneswar, Varahi temple, Chaurasi Temple and Teli ka Mandir at Gwalior are a few examples of the developed *valabhi* shrine. The formative concept of the *valabhi* shrine is explained by a small subsidiary stone shrine in the Muktesvara temple complex, Bhubaneswar (fig.3.18).

[20] Mitra, D. *Bhubaneswar*, Archaeological Survey of India. N. Delhi, 1978. p. 19, 50.
[21] Hardy, 2002, p. 88 and 106., figure 2.

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The developed *valabhi* shrine of the Vaital Deul, in its lower part shows an intricate *vedibandha* with *jangha* part articulated by pilasters. On the shorter side another complete *valabhi* shrine is superimposed crowned by a composition of split *gavakshas* and full *gavaksha* which displays the concept of the barrel vaulted roof of the *valabhi* shrine (fig.3.19 & 3.20). Such end representation of the valabhi shrine was used in Bengal in the stone-built temples of the 'Telkupi type'. In the brick-built temples of Bengal and earlier on the Surya temple at Deo mentioned above, such end representation of the *valabhi* shrine as an aedicule is not used but the longer side of the *valabhi* shrine is used as an aedicule with a *latina* aedicule superimposed on it (fig.3.9). The *shikhara* of the Vaital deul below the two tiered barrel vaulted roof has two *bhumis* marked by square *bhumi amalakas.*

The *valabhi* mode of the *nagara* tradition of temple building is significant in Bengal architecture due to its subtle presence in all periods. There is at least one temple of the *valabhi* mode called Sarvamangala temple belonging to the sixteenth century located at Garhbeta, Midnapore. In scholarly works the *valabhi* mode is neither discussed nor ever reported from the any part of Bengal and its aedicular representation on the important temples[22] also remained unnoticed. However analyzing a temple with its aedicular components[23] makes the use of *valabhi* mode in Bengal temple architecture amply clear. Its use on the extant *latina* temples of Bengal is described along with the description of those temples in chapter five. Here we may again mention the Surya temple at Deo in central Magadha where a *valabhi* aedicule is superimposed on the *latina* shrine and over the *valabhi* aedicule a smaller *latina* aedicule is further superimposed (fig.3.9). The use of this composition on many temples of Purulia and Bankura explained with a drawing in chapter five (drg.5.2) displays the influence of the heartland of Magadha on temple architecture of Bengal.

Fig. 3.21: Stupa votive with *valabhi* and *phamsana* aedicules, From early Pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Fig. 3.22: Stupa votive with *valabhi* doorway and *phamsana* aedicule, From early Pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

In the following paragraphs the *valabhi* representations on the architectural fragments of the study region are discussed. The formative concept of the *valabhi* mode is very clearly explained by an aedicular *valabhi* unit used on one side of a votive stupa of black basalt collected from Magadha region belonging to the Pala period[24] kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (fig. 3.21). In the lower part five *Dhyani Buddhas* are shown in five niches and one each on both sides, all covered by a *kapotapali* moulding. At the upper level a central niche is shown flanked by two split halves of a *gavaksha* and crowned by a small but full *gavaksha*. The whole composition is surmounted by an elongated barrel vault crowned by a central *kalasha* flanked by lions on each side. The ends of the barrel vault roof show *gavaksha* windows, explaining the concept of a *valabhi* shrine. This piece is of great significance as it explains the reason for the oblong plan in the Buddhist pantheon and the sanctity of the body of the superstructure where the deities may be placed. In later examples, only *gavaksha* patterns signify the presence of the

[22] 'Deul type' brick-built temples discussed in chapter five.
[23] The method of analysis used by Adam Hardy in his various writings listed in the Bibliography section.
[24] As per the records of the Indian Museum, Kolkata.

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deity and this sanctity is the reason behind their ever-expanding patterns on the body of the temple. The heart-shaped *gavaksha* with or without a deity acquires the most prominent and most visible place on the *shikharas* of the temples in Bengal.

In the second example of the votive stupa kept in the courtyard of the Indian Museum, Kolkata, the *valabhi* mode is used as a doorway to a shrine within stupa (fig 3.22). A trefoil-arched niche with seated Buddha is placed on the body of the tower which is the space taken by *gavaksha* in other examples. Here also *gavaksha* windows are carved at the ends of the barrel-vaulted roof.

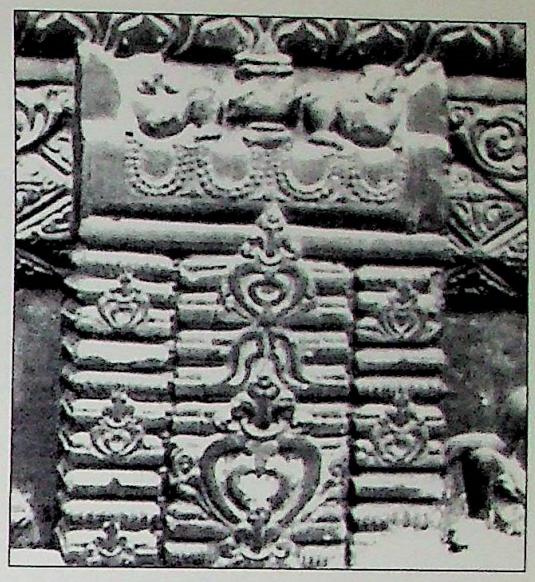

Fig. 3.23: Lintel of a temple doorway showing *valabhi shikhara*, Indian Museum, Kolkata, from Magadha, 10th century.

The *valabhi* shrine in full is depicted on the circular arch frame from the Ranchi Museum (fig.3.1). On the lower wall portion a deity in shown in the center housed in a niche. The tower shows five tiers surmounted by a barrel-vaulted roof crowned by a central *kalasha* but lions seen in all other examples are not present here. Another *valabhi* tower is shown with intricate details on a black basalt lintel housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata[25] (fig.3.23). This architectural fragment was collected from north Bihar and belongs to the Pala period. The tiered central part on the tower has an intricate pattern forming the heart-shaped *gavaksha* crowned by a *kirtimukha*. The *gavakshas* are also used on the *venukosha* of the *karnaratha* which has square quoin *amalakas* and divided into three *bhumis*. Since the *valabhi* tower is carved in low relief, the sides of the barrel vault roof of the tower are not carved, but a *kalasha* and two lions facing the opposite directions crown the vaulted roof.

The provenance of the above four architectural fragments from various parts of the study region clearly demonstrates the familiarity of the builders of eastern India with the *valabhi* mode of the *nagara* language of temple architecture. Other than the parts of Orissa, Gwalior, a few examples of this mode are also found in the hill region of north India. At Jageshwar across the Jatganga stream, on the west wall of the Chandika temple, a *valabhi* shrine, we see the use of a superimposed *latina* aedicule.[26] This shrine forms a part of the Kubera group which have many *valabhi* shrines. In Bengal and Magadha this composition is used on the *latina* temples where a *valabhi* aedicule superimposed by a *latina* aedicule is used like the Jageshwar temple (fig.3.24).

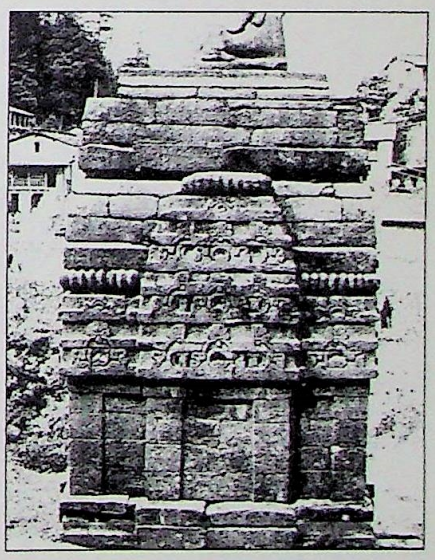

Fig. 3.24: A *latina* aedicule placed on *valabhi* shrine. Chandika temple, Jageshwar, 9th century. (source: EITA, Himachala style, phase1, III B. plate 240)

Early Representation of the *Phamsana* Shrines and the Probable Sources

The third mode of the *nagara* language of temple building is the *phamsana* distinguished by its pyramidal structure made up by eaves mouldings with recesses in between. These shrines have a square ground plan with a cubical sanctum. The pyramidal tower may be crowned by a similar *mastaka* as that of the *latina shikhara*.

[25] Bagchi, 1993, p.122 and plate 4, has used this lintel to mention 'shikhara' (*latina*) temple but did not mention the adjacent *valabhi* tower.

[26] EITA, Himachala style, phase1, III B. p.108 and plate 240 reproduced as fig. 3.24.

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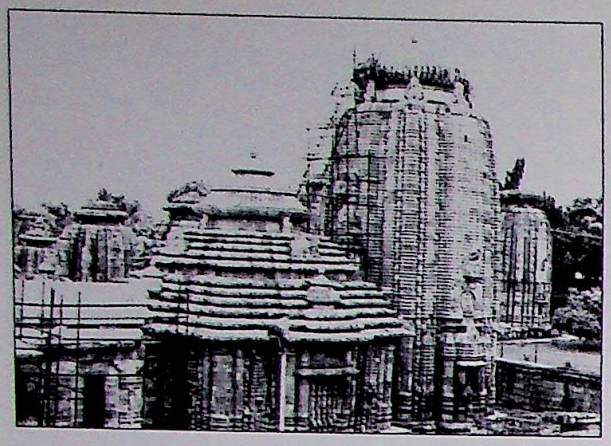


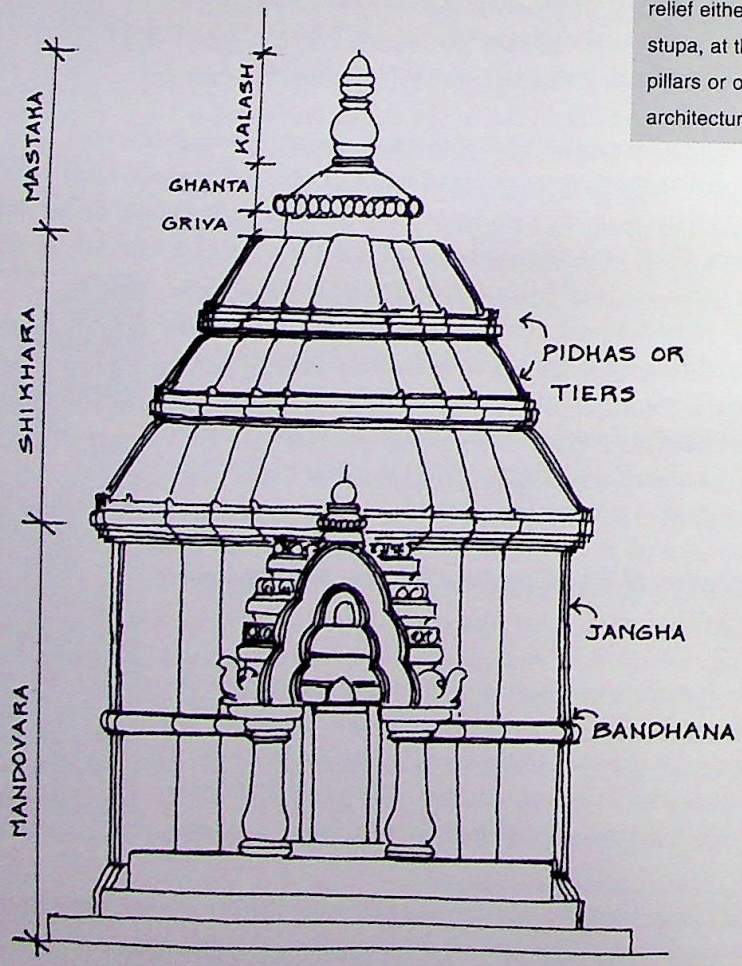
Fig. 3.25: *Phamsana* mode used for *jagmohan* of Parvati temple. Bhubaneswar, eleventh century.

The examples of the *phamsana* mode are the *jagmohan* part of the Muktesvara and Parvati temple at Bhubaneswar. The various parts of this mode of temple building are labeled in a drawing of a *phamsana* shrine in Bengal (drg.3.5).

In the Parvati temple at Bhubaneswar (fig.3.25) two sets of the tiers (six in the first set and five in the upper set) of eaves mouldings form a pyramidal roof crowned by a huge *mastaka* in which most prominent part is the bell shaped *ghanta* element. Any *rathaka* projections in the ground plan and wall section are also continued on the pyramidal roof. When used for the *mandapa* as in this temple, the *phamsana* mode shows two side projections forming windows while the other two projections form the *mukhamandapa* and the *antarala* between the sanctum and the *mandapa*. These projections may also be crowned by smaller *mastaka* above a tiered roof as seen in the Parvati temple.

In miniature representations, the *phamsana* mode of the *nagara* language is used more often in Bengal than the other two modes. The representation is mainly in relief either on the sides of a stupa, at the bottom of the pillars or on other architectural fragments. In the majority of representations of the *phamsana* shrine in

In miniature representations, the *phamsana* mode of the *nagara* language is used more often in Bengal than the other two modes. The representation is mainly in relief either on the sides of a stupa, at the bottom of the pillars or on other architectural fragments.



Drg. 3.5: A typical *phamsana* shrine in Bengal with its various parts.

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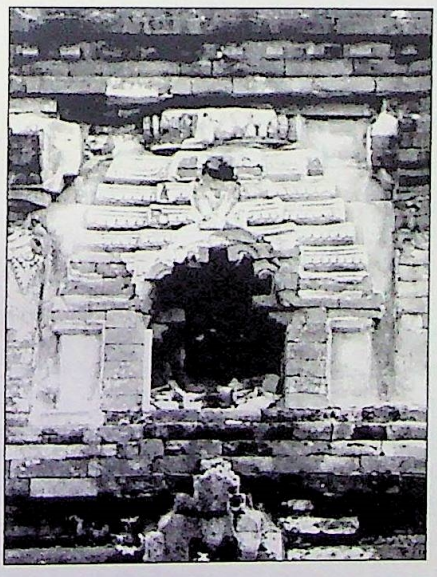
relief, it is shown in a trefoil arched pavilion form topped by three or five tiered pyramidal tower comprising of eaves mouldings. The face shows a configuration of the *gavaksha* motif on top of the trefoil arch. In some cases a *kirtimukha* is used on top of the arch. Such examples can be seen on the many Pala period stupa votives kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (fig.3.21 & 3.22). No votives of the *phamsana* shrine could be found in the study region.

Saraswati[27] (1934), Haque[28] (1999) and Bandyopadhyay[29] (2002) have done detailed study of the *phamsana* mode as depicted on the terracotta plaques, sculptures and also in manuscript paintings. These studies discuss the origin of the *phamsana* mode from tiered wooden huts. While describing the Ashrafpur bronze *chaitya*, perhaps one of the earliest representations of the type, Saraswati mentioned 'the derivation of the type from bamboo or wooden huts thus seems to be clear and explicit'.[30] These studies of immense value do not however cover architectural fragments, votives and the representation of this form in architecture.

This study of the architectural fragments is significant for Bengal temple architecture because in Bengal the *latina* mode shows the influence of the *phamsana* mode from the very beginning of our study period as seen in the arch frame from the Ranchi Museum (fig.3.17). Later in our study period, we also notice some extant *latina* temples who do away with *madhyalata* and their *shikhara* comprises of only tiered mouldings under the influence of the *phamsana* mode such as seen at Pandra, Dhanbad discussed in chapter five.

Perhaps the earliest representation of the *phamsana* shrine in high relief brickwork may be seen in the Nalanda remains, on the wall of the temple number five, the part belonging to the Pala period (fig.3.26). Here several tiered mouldings are used on the tower covered by the stucco decoration. This example is significant as it shows the possibility of a *triratha* plan of the shrine and a multifoliated arched niche



Left to right
Fig.3.26: *Phamsana* shrine carved in brick relief work,Wall of temple 5, Nalanda, early Pala period.

Fig. 3.27: Tiers of a *phamsana* top of trefoil arched niche. Re-used late Pala-Sena niche on Adina mosque, Pandua.

[27] Saraswati, 1975, pp. 1-10.
[28] Haque Enamul, "The Early phase of Architecture of Ancient Bengal as redeemed from Terracotta Plaques". *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol 4, 1999, pp 427-453.
[29] Bandyopadhyay, 2002.
[30] Saraswati, 1976, p.67, plate I,1.

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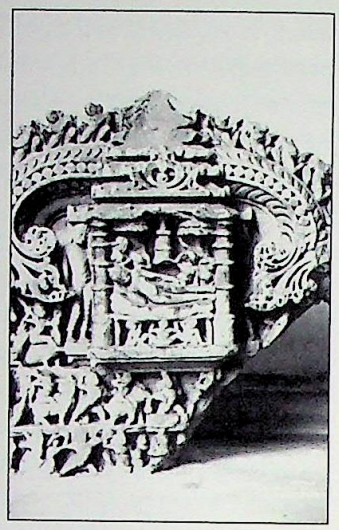

Clockwise

Fig. 3.28: Detail of the base of the pilaster of trefoil arched niche. Re-used late Pala-Sena niche on Adina mosque, Pandua.

Fig. 3.29: Detail of the *phamsana* shrine crowned by *gavaksha*, Early pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Fig. 3.30: *Makara torana* showing three *phamsana* shrines, from Magadha . Early pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

instead of a trefoil one. A flat *amalaka* crowns the composition. This representation shows the development of the mode for use as an architectural form on the walls of an important structure.

Another significant example may be observed on the west wall of the Adina mosque at Pandua. Behind the re-used Pala period niche in the thirteenth *mihrab*, the use of *phamsana* mode similar to the Buddhist votive stupa faces can be clearly noticed (fig.3.27, 3.28). Here a stunted trefoil arch is crowned by a stylized *kirtimukha*. Four tiered mouldings can still be seen in the mutilated example without any crowning feature on the tower. The beautifully carved pilasters of the arch frame have *purnaghata* at their bases and flanking them the figures of Ganga and Yamuna river goddesses housed in a miniature *phamsana* shrine form.[31]

The *phamsana* mode when used without trefoil arched niche presents a representation similar to the *jagmohan* structure used in the Orissan temples, but is rarely seen in Bengal architecture and art objects of the early period. In a rare example, a *makara torana* of the Pala period, housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata, three *phamsana* shrines are represented showing important events from the Buddha's life (fig.3.29,3.30). These representations clearly show a five-tiered pyramidal roof supported on round columns over a *vedi*. A stylized heart shape *gavaksha* in place of trefoil niche crowns the pavilion, again underlining the significance of the

[31] Banerji, Naseem A. "The Mihrabs in the Adina Mosque: Evidence of the Re-use of Late Pala-Sena Remains" *Marg 50* no.3 1999, pp.82-93. In this article Banerji has used the presence of *phamsana shikhara* behind the *mihrab* niche as one of the argument to prove this niche to be of the late Pala-Sena period.

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gavaksha motif on the body of the *shikhara*.

Another such rare representation is on the arch frame of the Ranchi museum (fig.3.1) where a shrine right from the *vedibandha* to the *kalasha* on top of the pyramidal tower is shown. This example shows the *triratha* ground plan of the shrine with an arched niche in the center of the *jangha* of *mandovara*.

The widespread depiction of this mode from all parts of the study region clearly demonstrates that the mode must have been in use in the whole of the study region and must have influenced the *latina* mode in a profound manner resulting into the tiered *latina* temples. There are some extant shrines of the study period in *phamsana mode* but located in one geographical region discussed in chapter six.

By the above description of all the modes of the *Nagara* tradition of temple architecture in the early part of the study period, it is clear that the temple architecture in Bengal as depicted on votives and architectural fragments received influences from Orissa and Magadha but was part of the north Indian *Nagara* tradition that was widespread in the study region. Some important peculiarities observed through the above study are: the *phamsana* as the earliest used mode for the representation of shrines with a trefoil arch; the emphasis on verticality of the *latina* shrines; the influence of the *phamsana* mode on the *latina* mode temple representation; the use of *valabhi* mode as an aedicule superimposed on the *latina* shrine and the use and sanctity of the *gavaksha* window on the body of the *shikhara*. With above listed peculiarities some understanding of temple architecture of Bengal starts emerging which would be further extended with the study of the extant examples in coming chapters.¶

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Map 3. Map of the Study Region showing modern political divisions, rivers and historical sites.

ψ STONE-BUILT LATINA TEMPLES

Ω BRICK-BUILT LATINA TEMPLES

♦ PHAMSANA TEMPLES

MAP 4

SHOWING DISTRI BUTION OF EARLY TEMPLES IN BENGAL (800-1500 CE)

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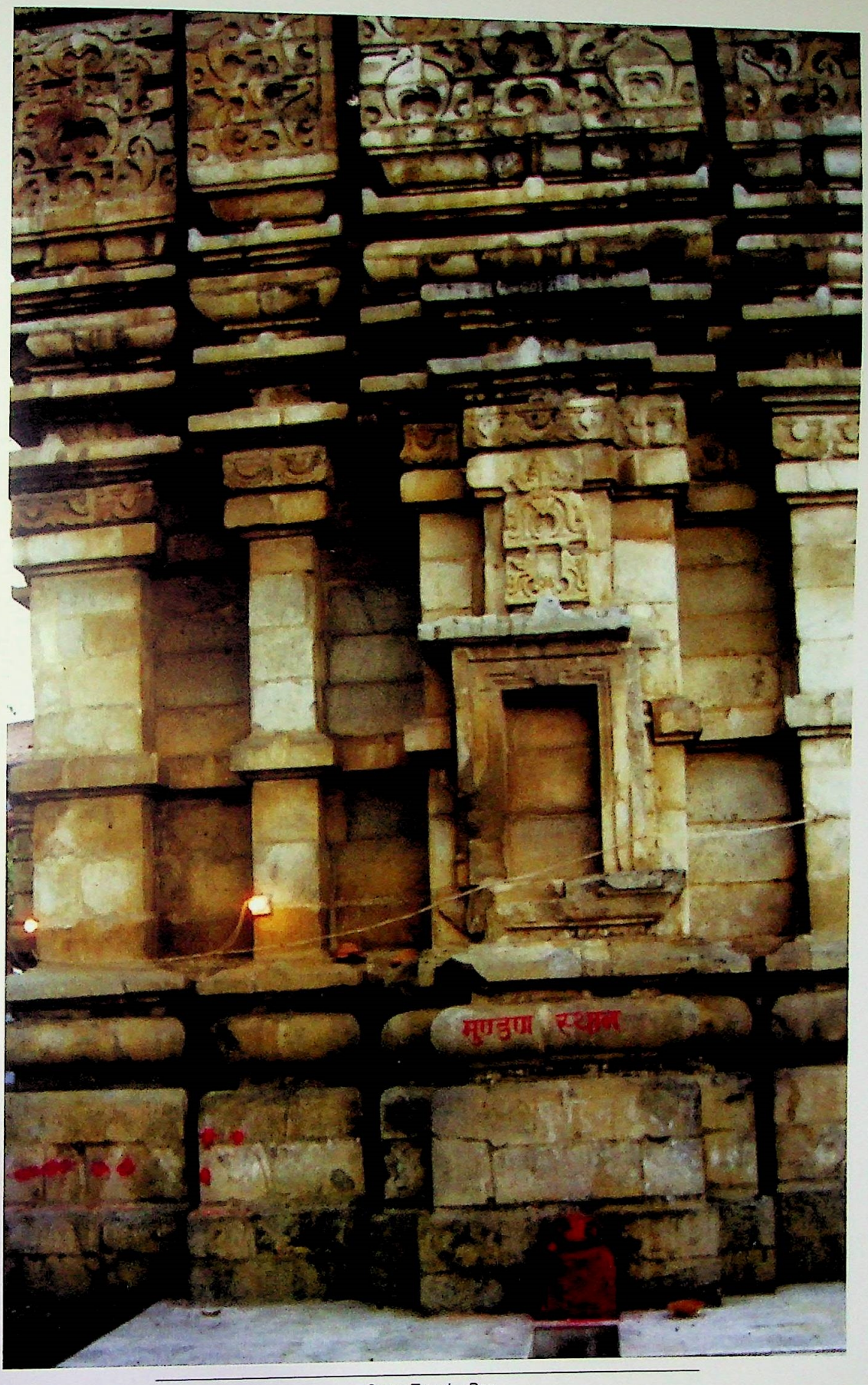

Surya Temple, Deo

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Valabhi shrine, Mukteshwar temple complex, Bhubaneswar

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Latina and valabhi shikhara, Indian Museum, Kolkata

Arch Frame, Ranchi Museum

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Detail of Phamsana shrine, Makara torana, Indian Museum, Kolkata

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Temple Architecture of Eastern India

Stone-Built *Latina* Temples : 9th to 16th Century

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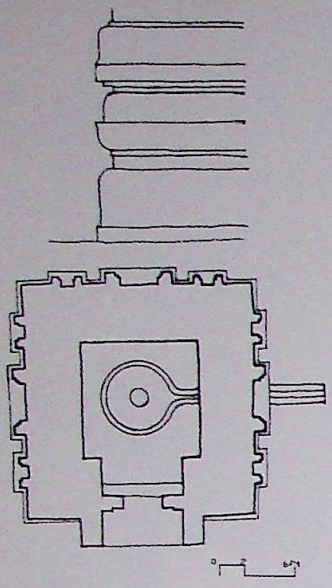

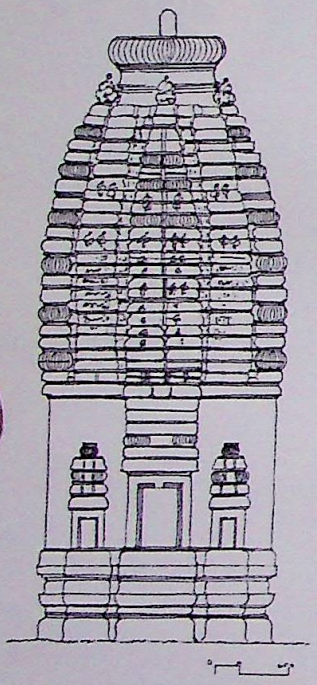

The *latina* temples found in eastern India were built using stone and brick both, available in the region. The use of material has influenced the architecture of these temples and as a result we observe a few types emerging in Bengal within the general characteristics of the *latina* mode. The brick-built *latina* temples in Bengal clearly display specific characteristics and are discussed in the next chapter. The following section deals with two types of the Bengali *latina* shrines built in stone named after the places they appeared first: 'Barakar type' and 'Telkupi type'.

Barakar Temple Type, *Latina* mode: The first Bengali type of *latina* shrine, which developed under the influence of Orissan traditions, and specially in the Parashurameshvar temple type, is called in the context of this study the 'Barakar type' after the name of the place where it appeared first in the Damodar-Barakar valley on the route to Tamluk from Varanasi. To understand the general characteristics of this Barakar type the extant examples are discussed below with their structures understood as the following parts and in the following order:-

1. Plan Forms: This would explain the ground plan of the structure from inside and outside just above the base mouldings so that any projections from regular geometrical shapes and the character of these projections such as niche, aedicule or simple offsets are explained and analysed.
2. Elevation of the exterior form of these *latina* mode temples and major parts such as *mandovara*, *shikhara* and *mastaka* with their decorative elements on each part as detailed in drg.3.1.
3. Section of the structure, material and construction aspects.

Siddhesvara temple, Barakar, Burdwan, early 9th century

This temple forms a part of the group locally known as Begunia in the town of Barakar. They stand in a walled complex on flat rocky land, not far from the bank of the Barakar, a tributary of the Damodar river.

The Siddhesvara Mahadeva temple is situated to the southwest of the complex and shows a close resemblance with the Parashuramesvara temple at Bhubaneswar as described below. It consists of a sanctum, square in plan with a projecting doorway on the east side (drg.4.1). The remaining three sides have three bold projections on each face all containing niches. The sanctum plan may be said to be *triratha*, not considering the side projections. The central or *bhadra* projection is larger than those on the *karnas*. The *karna* projections are surmounted by the pediments composed of rows of *kapotapalis* and *amalakas* and crowned by fair-sized *amalaka* (drg.4.2). The pediment of the central projection has sketchily carved split half *gavakshas*. In the case of the Parashurameshvara temple at Bhubaneswar, Adam Hardy[1] calls these projections *valabhi* aedicules and by that comparison, the projections on this Barakar temple may be said to be the *latina* aedicules with a central *lata* on the pediment and corner *amalakas*. The use of this type of *latina* aedicule in this arrangement is repeated on many temples of Bengal in later temples of the tenth and eleventh centuries and explained with the aedicular components in the drg.4.4.

Top to bottom
Drg. 4.1:
Ground Plan and Detail of *Vedibandha*, Siddhesvara Mahadev, Barakar, Burdwan, early 9th century.

Drg. 4.2:
Side elevation with *latina* aedicules

The base moulding or *vedibandha* rises from the rock below and consists of three tiers - *khura-kumbha, kalasha* with a flattened top, plain *antarpatta* and *kapotapali*. These tiers bear a resemblance with early Kalinga temples in shape. The *jangha* or wall of the sanctum

[1] Adam Hardy in his unpublished work about Orissan temples and in a talk delivered at ACSAA Symposium Boston, 2004 titled "The Temple Architecture of Orissa: Influences and Assimilations."

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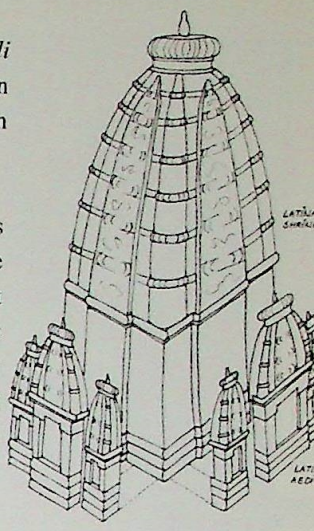
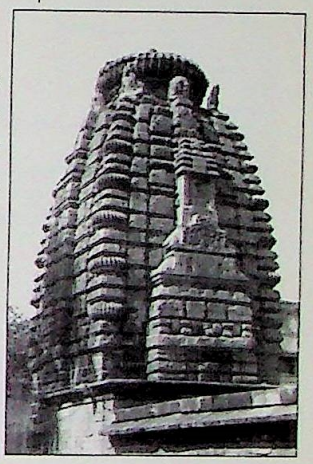
is plain except the projecting *latina* aedicules. The wall is capped by a single *kapotapali* moulding forming *varandika* over which the *latina shikhara* rises. The *kantha* in between the two mouldings of the *varandika* as found in other *latina* mode examples is absent in this Barakar example.

The tower of the *shikhara* rises with a slight inward curvature from the start and is surmounted by a spheroid *amalaka sila* (fig. 4.1, 4.2). In close resemblance with the Parashuramesvara temple type, the projections on the body of the sanctum cube do not correspond to the divisions on the tower and only the central projection of the *jangha* corresponds to the *lata* of the *latina shikhara*. The *shikhara* has seven *bhumis* marked by *bhumi amalakas* which are circular in a specific Bengal characteristic with fluted indentations. The tower retains the square plan below the *amalaka* level up to the *skandha* with sharp edges of the corners and of the central projections. The temple has a well-articulated *sukanasa* crowned by a relief of Lakulisha and his disciples on the front face. The body of the *shikhara* in the *latina* temples of the *nagara* tradition is generally covered by interlacing *gavaksha* which are only sketchily represented on the Barakar temple. The tower of this temple is filled with relief carvings of highly animated figures, both secular and religious in nature. Krishna Deva[2] thinks these reliefs of dancers, acrobats, archers, soldiers, *kinnars* and *vidyadharas* lack the liveliness and plasticity of Paharpur figures. He dates them and the temple around early ninth century.

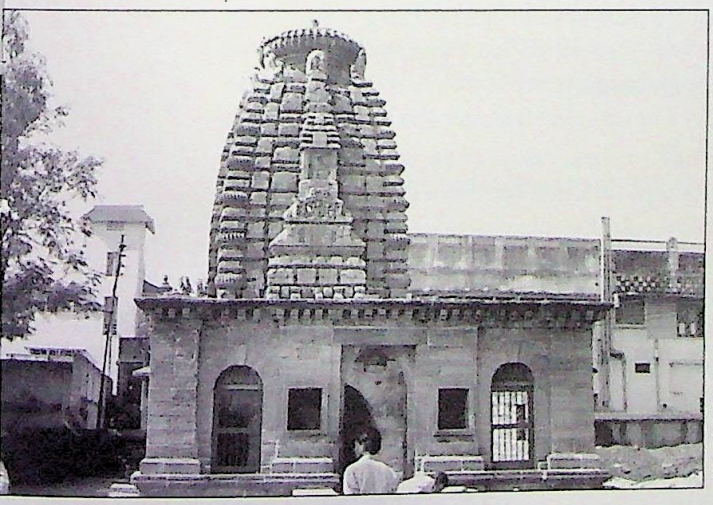


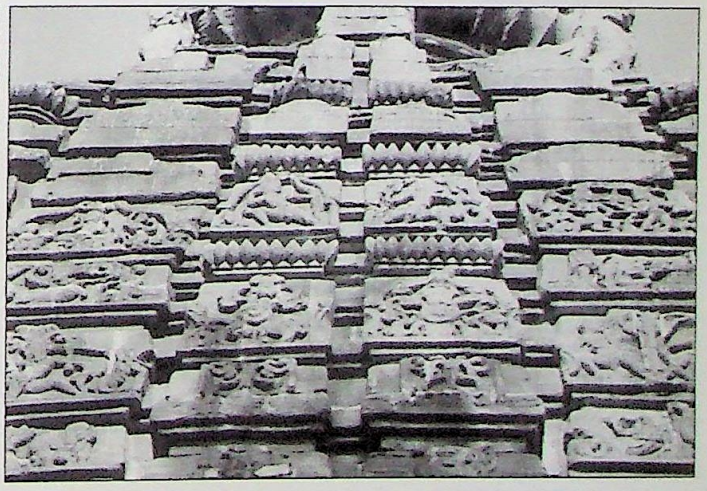
Drg. 4.4: Aedicular components of the Barakar type, *Latina* Shrine in Bengal.

The *shikhara* is peculiar in that the back *madhyalata* shows a central bifurcation and repeats *amalakas* at the three uppermost levels (fig.4.3). Other faces also have *amalakas* on the *madhyalata* and the east face shows them on the *pratilatas* also. Such a double *venukosha* is a feature on some western and central Indian temples in the eighth century[3] and reflects a common *nagara* tradition. The sanctum of the temple is roofed by the corbelled slabs called *mudas*, thus forming a chamber above, which is closed and inaccessible.



Clockwise
Fig. 4.2: Detail of the *latina shikhara*, Siddhesvara temple Barakar, Burdwan, early 9th century.
Fig. 4.3: Detail of the double *venukosha* on *shikhara*, Siddhesvara temple, early 9th century.
Fig. 4.1: Siddhesvara temple, Barakar, Burdwan, *Latina* mode, early 9th century.





[2] Deva, Krishna. "Styles of separate lineage: Vanga style, phase 1, c. eighth-ninth centuries A. D., Palas." *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*. (hereafter mentioned as EITA) Ed. Meister, Michael W. with M. A. Dhaky.Vol. II, part 2, North India, Period of Early Maturity, New Delhi: AIIS; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, chapter 43. pp. 394-407.
[3] Saraswati, S. K. *Architecture in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1976, p. 52. He mentions a temple in Kathiawar with double *venukosha*.

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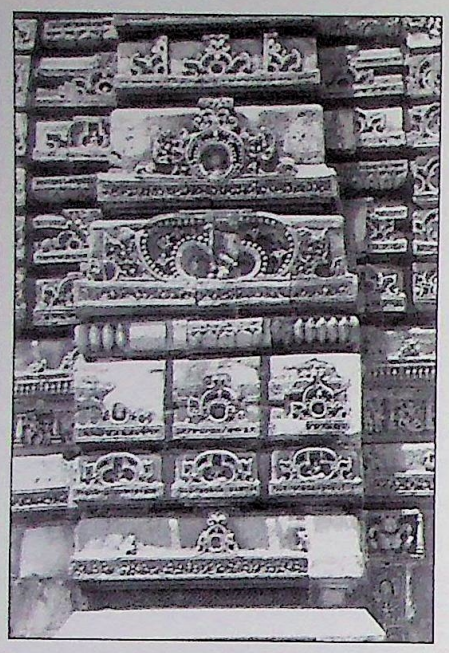
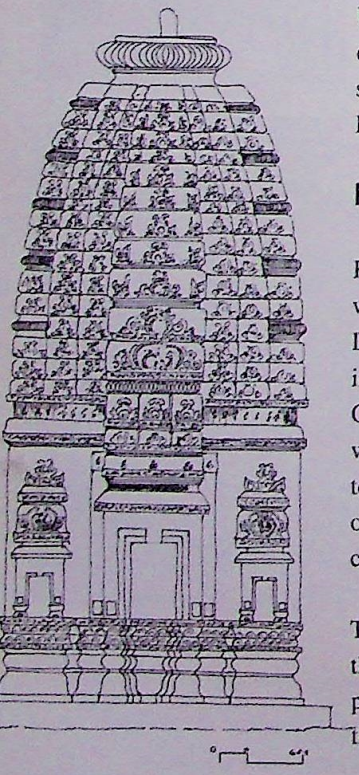


Left to right:
Fig.4.4: Kotaitundi Temple, Khiching, early 9th century showing the restored front side.
Fig.4.5: Pediment of the central *Valabhi* aedicule, Kotaitundi Temple, Khiching, early 9th century.
Fig.4.6: Detail of the *Valabhi* aedicule on *Karna,* Kotaitundi Temple, Khiching, early 9th century.
Below:
Drg.4.3: Side elevation with *valabhi* aedicules, Kotaitundi Temple, Khiching, early 9th century



The Barakar temple type described above must not have been the only temple built in Bengal but it is the earliest surviving temple and shows the typical characteristics of the type it represents. This temple type might have been used at major centres of temple building in Bengal such as Telkupi on the bank of the Damodar, not far from Barakar, Boram and Pakbira on the bank of river Kasai in Purulia district, Panchpargana temple sites on the bank of the river Kanchi sloping down from the Chhotanagpur plateau, Deulbhira in Bankura district and Khiching on the border of Bengal and Orissa. However the evidences are scanty but the remains of the structures at Khiching, Chhotanagpur plateau, Purulia and Bankura show the distribution of this early temple type in Bengal (see map 4).

Kotaitundi Temple, Khiching, early ninth century

Khiching, on the border of Bengal and Orissa, was the capital of the early Bhanja rulers who were feudatories of the Pala kings of Bengal and it formed a part of the Pala Empire. Due to its geographical location and political role, Khiching experienced varied cultural influences and contacts. The art of Khiching played an important link between Bengal and Orissa. From the beginning of the ninth century, for four hundred years, temple building went on in Khiching but we have only three surviving temples and the remains of eight temples of various periods, with one of them belonging to the ninth century. The temples of Khiching are built of blue fine-grained chlorite, which is more enduring in nature and conducive for receiving fine ornamentation.

The Kotaitundi temple is the earliest example in Khiching and shows the characteristics of the Barakar type of the *latina* mode (fig. 4.4, 4.5, 4.6). It consists of a sanctum, square in plan with a projecting doorway on the east side (drg.4.3). On the sidewalls the pediment of the central aedicule has three beautifully carved split *gavakshas* in two tiers capped by

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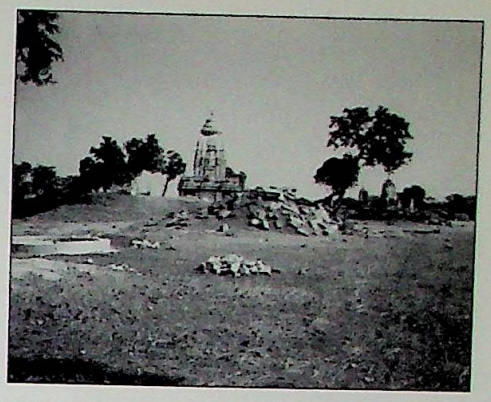
amalakas and topped by the *valabhi* roof pattern forming the *valabhi* shrine. The pediments of the side aedicules are in two tiers of *kapotapali* mouldings of different sizes carved with *gavaksha* patterns forming *valabhi* aedicules. The base mouldings or *vedibandha* rises from the *upana* and consists of three tiers *khura-kumbha, kalasha* and *kapotapali* and the fourth tier is the *vedi* which should be understood as a part of the *jangha*. The upper two tiers: *vedi* and *kapotapali* are exquisitely carved with foliage and *gavakshas*. These tiers bear the resemblance with Kalinga temples of the Bhaumakara period (8th- late 9th centuries). Unlike the Parashurameshvar temple the tiers of the base mouldings continue all around including in the central niches on the *bhadra* projection. The posts of the outer frames of these niches reach below like a pilaster. The *jangha* or wall of the sanctum is plain except the projecting *valabhi* aedicules on both sides of the central *valabhi* shrine. The wall is capped by *varandika* comprising of two *kapotapali* mouldings with an in-between sunken frieze called *kantha* that has sculptured panels.



The *shikhara* rises above with a slight inward curvature from the start and is surmounted by a spheroid *amalaka sila* topped by a representation of the *sivalinga*. Here also following the typical characteristics the projections on the body of the sanctum cube do not correspond to the divisions on the tower. The *shikhara* of this temple has five *bhumis* marked by *bhumi amalakas* which are square unlike the circular ones at Barakar. The front projection on the *shikhara* is bolder and projects to form a doorway at lower level. This portion is largely restored and devoid of any *sukanasa* or other details. An opening of the chamber above the sanctum may be seen on this projection above the *garbha muda*. In the typical *nagara* characteristic the body of the *shikhara* in Orissan temples is covered by interlacing *gavaksha* which are represented on this Khiching temple but due to restoration they are made plain at many places. The south face retains much of the original carvings which are mainly formed of *gavaksha* patterns. Since the temple has three tiers in the *vedibandha* and an exquisitely carved *vedi*, hence, should have been built in the early ninth century during the Bhaumakara period in neighbouring Orissa, almost the same period when the Barakar temple was built displaying the popularity of this simple temple type in a large geographical region.

Fig. 4.7: Temple Remains at Haradih on the bank of Kanchi, Ranchi, ChhotanagpurPlateau, ninth century.

Fig. 4.8: *Mahisasuramardini* temple at Haradih, Ranchi, Barakar type.

Temple Remains at Chhotanagpur Plateau, ninth century

On west of Barakar this temple type is seen on the Chhotanagpur plateau used for many smaller temples. The Chhotanagpur plateau can easily be said to be the whole of the state of Jharkhand in the Indian Union today and the eastern fringes of the plateau extend up to the whole of Purulia district and western parts of Birbhum, Burdwan, Bankura and Midnapur districts in the state of West Bengal. As observed earlier the Chhotanagpur plateau was securely integrated into the political network of Magadha from the post-Gupta period onwards.[4]

First, as early as 1872, E.T. Dalton[5] mentioned the ruins of some temples on the bank of the Kanchi river near Bundu in the southeastern portion of the Ranchi district. Secondly,

[4] Chakrabarti, Dilip K. *Archaeology of Eastern India: Chhotanagpur plateau and West Bengal*. New Delhi, 1993, p. 17.
[5] Dalton, E. T., 'Rude stone monuments in Chhotanagpur and other places'. *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* 42, 1873, pp. 112-19.

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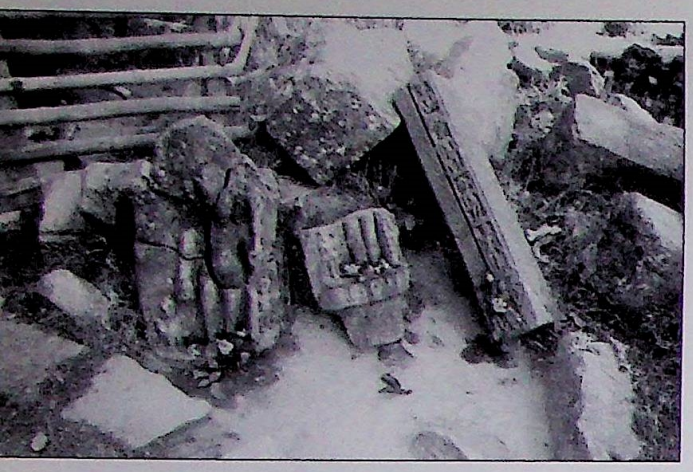

Top
Fig. 4.9: Architectural fragments at Haradih, Ranchi

in 1915, C.L. Roy[6] drew attention to some architectural and sculptural ruins at Majhgaon in the present district of Gumla. Here the Tanginath temple built in the Barakar type of the *latina* mode displays the distant reach of the type. A visit to some sites mentioned by Dalton in the Panchpargana area in district Ranchi revealed a new temple of Mahamaya Devi being constructed at the original location of an earlier temple at Haradih (fig.4.7, 4.8). This site is on the bank of the Kanchi river near Bundu and remains of eight temples can be easily identified on a mound. Scattered *Sivalingas* seen by Dalton are now arranged on a platform with some architectural fragments such as lintels, entablatures and *amalakas*. The *vedibandha* and plinth of at least three Siva shrines can be noticed with intact *Sivalinga*. All of them are *triratha* on plan with four tiers of the base mouldings as seen on two intact temples and seem to have followed the Barakar type. The site has become active again with the new construction of the Mahamaya temple which houses a very attractive basalt image of the mother Goddess Durga seated on a lion.

Below
Fig. 4.10: Durga temple at Diuri, Tamar, Ranchi, Barakar type, Chhotanagpur Plateau, 9th century.

There are two small ancient temples surviving on a mound with images inside. The temple with the Mahisasuramardini image is a single square cell structure, five feet on the side and twelve feet high. With a central projection on *triratha* plan, its walls rise directly from the ground and are topped by a small *shikhara* and *mastaka* (fig.4.9). The *vedibandha* has four mouldings *khura-kumbha, kalasha, kapotapali* and *patta*. The portion between *vedibandha* and *varandika* is plain except the *bhadra* projection forming a niche. Here also a pediment showing split half *gavakshas* and a *gavaksha* crowns the niche and this is also a clear *valabhi* aedicule starting from the ground. A recessed frieze called *kantha* between two *kapotapali* mouldings indicates the *varandika*. The tower rises in three *bhumi* stages which are marked by square *bhumi amalakas*. The crowning *amalaka* is placed over the sealing slab of the *shikhara* and there is no *muda*.

The other surviving temple with a *Sivalinga* inside stands close to the above-mentioned temple and is similar in size and appearance suggesting the type of the remaining collapsed temples on the site.

The other sites mentioned by Dalton are on the banks of the Karkari river at Diuri, Palna, Bero and Pandadih in Ranchi district. The temple at Diuri, about two miles east of Tamar, houses an image of sixteen-armed mother goddess with Siva on the top[7]. The temple is half ruined (presently being restored) and the plan and construction

[6] Roy, C. L., 'Notes on some ruins at Majhgaon in the district of Ranchi'. *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society,* 1, 1915, pp. 117-24.

[7] Das, D. R., "Temples of Chhotanagpur". *Seminar on 'Archaeology in Eastern India'*, February 15-17, Bihar Puravid Parishad, Patna. 1989. He described Diuri temple and compared it with temples at Para in District Purulia. The Para temple is of much later date and described in next chapter.

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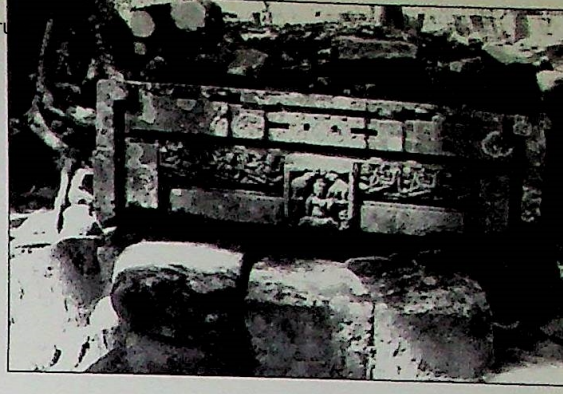


is similar to the temple remains at Haradih (fig.4.10). However, here the central segment projects in front to create a vestibule leading to the inner chamber. This central segment also projects in front to develop into a *sukanasa* on its face like the Barakar temple. Similar architectural fragments have been noticed at Haradih and other sites of the plateau. The *vedibandha* of the Diuri temple is similar to Haradih temple with four tiers. Above the *varandika*, corner *amalakas* are square and the treatment of the *shikhara* is similar to the Barakar temple (fig. 4.11).

Clockwise:
Fig. 4.11: Detail of the *Varandika*, Durga temple, Diuri, Chhotanagpur Plateau, 9th century.

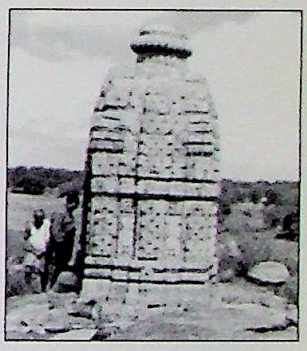
Fig. 4.12: Architectural fragments at Benisagar, Singhbhum, Chhotanagpur Plateau, 9th century.

Fig.4.13: Mahadev temple at Khekparta, Lohardaga, Chhotanagpur Plateau, 10th century.

Fig. 4.14: Siva temple at Deulbhira, Barakar type, Bankura, late 11th century.
(Source: ASI Kolkata circle)

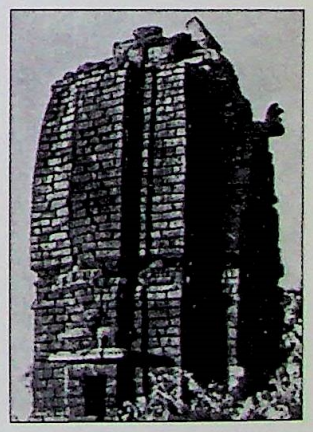
The distribution of the historical ruins in Singhbhum district of the plateau falls in two distinct areas: the area around Ichagarh near Purulia border and Benisagar near Khiching, which is close to, the Jharkhand - Orissa border. The Benisagar ruins must be considered an extension of the temple complex at Khiching in Orissa, which is only a few kilometers away and must have followed a similar architectural tradition. There are no structures surviving on the bank of the Benisagar tank but many architectural fragments such as lintels (fig.4.12), doorways, parts of *amalaka* and many sculptures are housed in an enclosure, which has remains of the plinths of at least two *triratha* temples with base mouldings similar to the Barakar temple type.

The Chhotanagpur plateau remains include impressive temples at Khekparta in Lohardaga district. Here a group of small eight shrines might have formed an Ashta Mahadeva group (fig.4.13). These small shrines are similar to the Haradih temple in treatment and detail. It is significant to note that on the Chhotanagpur plateau wherever we find the temples of the Pala period, they represent the Barakar type of the *latina* mode temples.



Deulbhira Temple, Bankura, late eleventh century

One example of an early period *latina* temple in Barakar type may be seen at Deulbhira in Bankura district in a derelict condition.[8] It consists of a sanctum, square in plan with a projecting doorway on east side. The sanctum plan is *triratha* with a width of 14 feet from outside. The base mouldings or *vedibandha* of the deteriorated temple are in three tiers. The temple is bare and plain suggesting that it was covered by limewash or stucco. The tower without any *bhumis* retains the square plan below the *amalaka* level with sharp edges of the corners and of the central projections. It has a plain *sukanasa* crowned by a figure of a rampant lion (fig.4.14). The construction of the superstructure of the *shikhara* is done by corbelled roofs or *mudas* in intermediate chambers. The absence of *bhumis*, the tall profile of the tower and the presence of *mudas* show the influence of the Telkupi archetype on this later example of the Barakar temple type.



By the above description of the temples it may be said that Barakar temple type in Bengal is a direct descendant of the Parashurameshvara temple type of Orissa. As depicted on the

[8] Saraswati, 1976, p. 56.

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For this present study inclusion of the Telkupi temples is a must even if it is to be done by secondary sources only, because Telkupi with its prolific and sustained architectural activity gave us more or less a continuous series of temples which are important evidence for the architecture of the *latina* temples in eastern India.

Jhewari bronze votive and the basalt lintel of the Pala period (fig.3.13) described in the last chapter, the type remained in use during the early Pala period of Buddhist domination. It was used in the secondary states of the Pala Empire such as Barakar, Khiching, Ichagarh, Panchet and Benisagar by the small kings and landholders who were the followers of Saivism as practiced and preached by Lakulisha in Orissa. The Telkupi temple type of the *latina* mode described below also borrow many characteristics of the Barakar type and the *latina* temples built in brick after the tenth century were influenced by the Barakar type when they started using temple aedicules on the faces of the *latina* shrines.

Telkupi Temple Type, *Latina* Mode: The most important temple building centre in Bengal was at Telkupi in Purulia district on the bank of the Damodar. It was the capital of Sekharbhum, the land ruled by the Shikhara dynasty. As observed in the chapter two, Telkupi is the corrupted form of Tailakampi, the capital of Rudrashikhara, one of the confederate chiefs who helped Ramapala (c.1077-1120) to crush the Kaivarta rebellion as mentioned in Ramacharita.[9]

Here temple construction seems to have started at the beginning of the Pala period in the eighth century and continued for next eight hundred years. Built of sandstone from Panchkot hills in Purulia, these temples withstood the ravages of time and some were in use till 1963 when this site was submerged under the water of the Damodar for an irrigation project. J.D. Beglar who noticed twenty-six temples on the site surveyed this important group of monuments in 1872-73 and his investigations were published in volume VIII of Archaeological Survey of India, Reports.[10] In 1872 also, many temples were found deserted, full of silt and in ruins due to frequent flooding of the site. It is heartening to note that Debala Mitra made a survey during 1960 and made a fresh record of the remaining temples. Along with this survey and many old photographs her findings were published in Memoirs of ASI No. 76.[11] A visit to Telkupi during the rainy season of 2002 could not reveal any temple remains except a few mounds of the stone debris on the bank of the Damodar.

For this present study inclusion of the Telkupi temples is a must even if it is to be done by secondary sources only, because Telkupi with its prolific and sustained architectural activity gave us more or less a continuous series of temples which are important evidence for the architecture of the *latina* temples in eastern India. Unfortunately this precious heritage, which had a significant place in the history of Indian temple architecture, disappeared before we could utilize its evidence fully. In the region around Telkupi, the temples were built using similar characteristics and at least thirteen of the twenty-six surveyed temples at Telkupi site belonged to one type termed as Telkupi archetype by Mitra.

By studying these temples it may be said that these *latina* temples of the *nagara* language were also related with the Parashurameshvara temple type at Bhubaneswar showing difference in the tall profile of the *shikhara*, treatment of the *karna* of *mandovara* part with pilasters like *kutastambhas* instead of temple aedicules, circular *bhumi amalakas* in place of square, and the large diameter of the crowning *amalakas*. The 'Telkupi type' shows influence from Magadha in the use of the bold heart shaped *gavakshas* as used in the Konch and Deo temples. The emphasis on verticality found in Magadha temples is also reflected in the use of pilasters on the *jangha*.

[9] Coupland, H. *Bengal District Gazetteers- Manbhum*, Calcutta, 1911, p. 53 and also p. 281

[10] Beglar, J. D. and Cunningham, A. *Report of a Tour through the Bengal Provinces, Archaeological Survey of India,* volume 8, Calcutta.1878 and Reprint New Delhi. 2000, p. 169-180

[11] Mitra, Debala. *Telkupi- a submerged temple–site in West Bengal*, MASI No. 76, N. Delhi, 1969.

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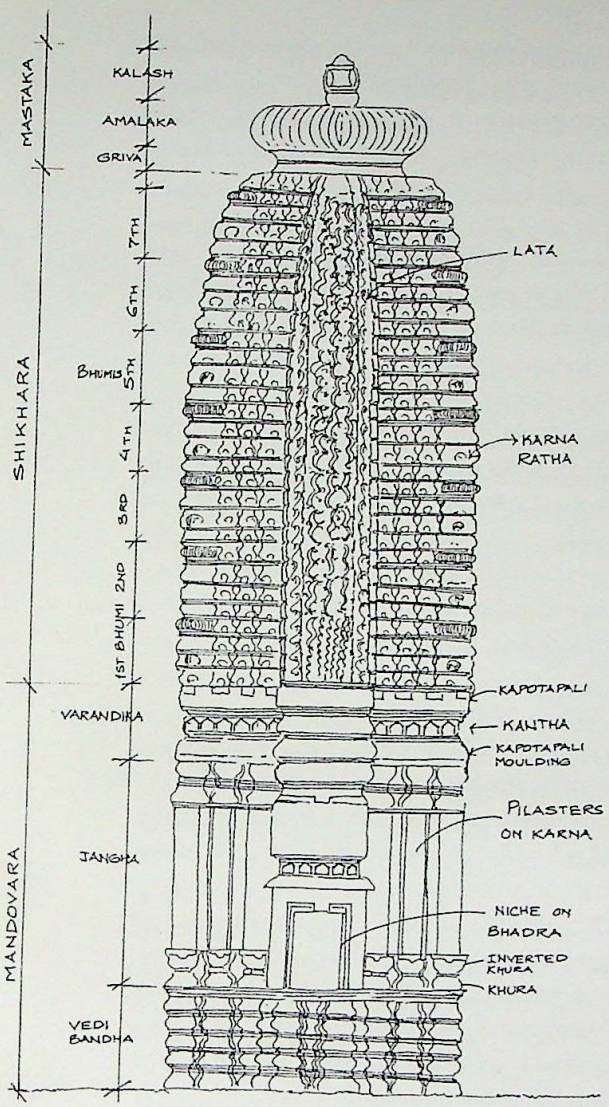
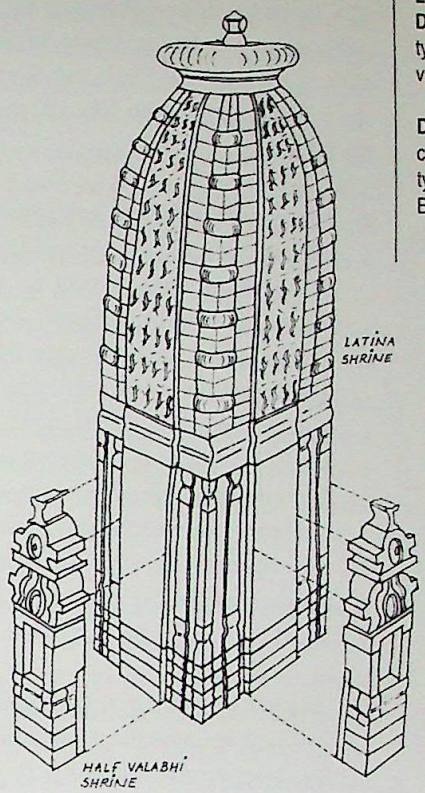




Left to right

Drg. 4.5: A typical Telkupi type *latina* shrine with its various parts

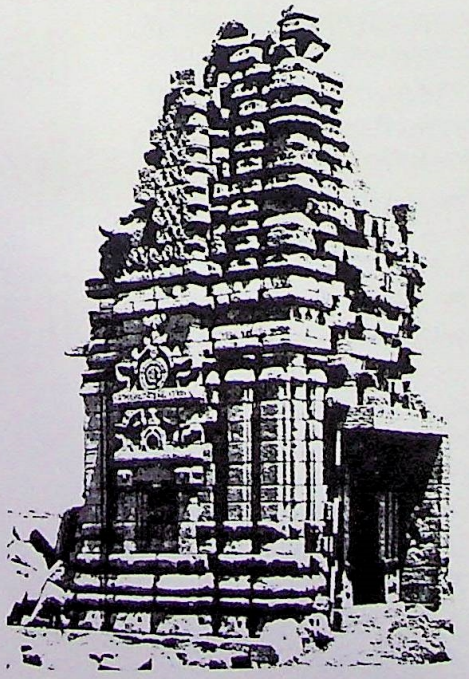
Drg. 4.8: Aedicular components of the Telkupi type, *Latina* Shrine in Bengal.

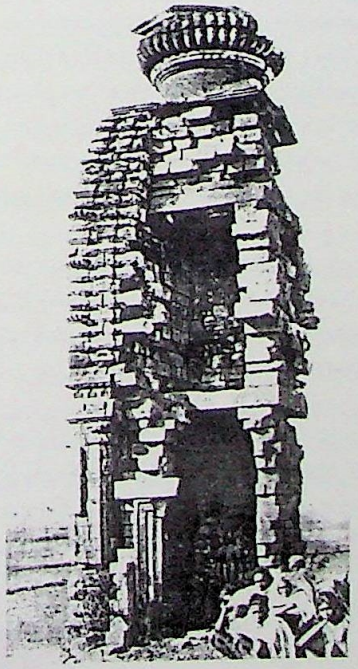
(Below) left to right

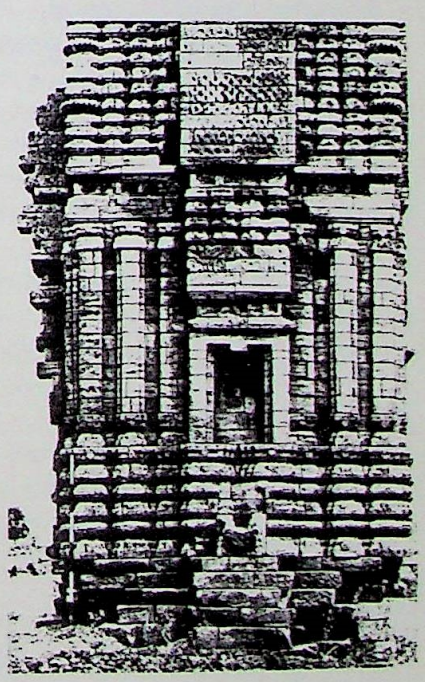
Fig. 4.15: Four tiers of *Vedibandha* and *Valabhi* aedicule, Temple no. 16, Telkupi site, Purulia, late 9th century. (Source: ASI Eastern Circle, 1960)

Fig. 4.16: *Garbha muda, ratna muda* and thin walls of *Shikhara* Temple no. 15, Telkupi site, Purulia, 10th century. (Source: Beglar's photograph, 1872-73)

Fig. 4.17: Observe proto *latina* aedicule above the niche, Temple no. 18, Telkupi site, Purulia, late 10th century. (Source: ASI Eastern Circle, 1960)







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The following characteristics of these temples as gathered from the above mentioned publications may be listed to explain the 'Telkupi type', better understood with a drawing of the elevation of the Banda temple of the Telkupi archetype (drg. 4.5), a drawing showing the aedicular components (drg.4.8) and reproduced figures of temple no.15,16 and 18 (fig. 4.15-4.17).

1. The temples of Telkupi had ground plan square inside and *triratha* outside, the walls being subjected to a projection in the middle of each face. A simple *valabhi* aedicule on the *bhadra* projections of the sanctum wall is used on the early temples (drg.4.8) and the *latina* aedicule is also used on the *bhadra* projections in the later temples of Telkupi. These aedicules have an oblong niche for subsidiary deity. Instead of two smaller aedicules on the sides of the central aedicule these temples are special in treatment of the *karna* part of the *jangha* by breaking it into a row of plain pilasters, which have a set of *kapotapali* and *vedi* both at the base and at the capital. The *bhadra* of the frontal face displays a greater projection, not only on the *mandovara* part but also on the *shikhara* to a certain height, than those on other three faces. There may be a provision of an extremely narrow vestibule in the thickness of the frontal *ratha,* which was flanked by thin walls on two sides and shaded by a ceiling, which projected forward from the top of the lintel of the doorframe.

2. As in the *latina* temples, the temple exterior is divided in three parts, namely *mandovara, shikhara* and *mastaka* respectively comprising vertical wall, the curvilinear spire and the crowning elements. Similarly seen are the three divisions on the *mandovara* exterior namely *vedibandha, jangha and varandika*: the *vedibandha* or base mouldings varying from four to six, of which the second from the bottom was a *kalasha* and others were *kapotapali.* The *varandika* of these temples was formed by two *kapotapali* shaped mouldings which did not continue on the *bhadra* projections. In between these two mouldings of the *varandika* a conspicuous horizontal depression called *kantha* was invariably relieved with trellis-patterned panels, each alternating with a pilaster crowned by an inverted stepped pyramid shape capital supporting the *shikhara* above.

It is significant to note that based on the number of tiers in the base mouldings, the appearance of *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules on the body of these temples and the images found in their sanctum, they have been dated by Mitra. It is very much likely that there might have been more than twenty-six temples before Beglar surveyed them in 1872-73 and those were from the earlier period built using the Barakar type.

3.In these *latina* temples, the *shikhara* is tall and straight at the start with inward curve starting at the top only. The *shikhara* is divided into *bhumis* and each *bhumi* is marked by *bhumi amalakas* which are circular as in the Barakar type. The temples were capped by a flattish *amalaka* with pronouncedly large diameter. The surface treatment of these temples was done by most recurring motif of *gavaksha.* The tiers of the *shikhara* are composed of *kapota* shaped mouldings, which are relieved by *gavaksha windows* with trellis pattern inside them. The *lata* projections on the *shikhara* are also relieved by *gavaksha* patterns.

4. On the *shikhara* or *skandha* of these temples rampant lions are never used. The thin walls of the *shikhara* were tied at intervals by flat stone slabs called *mudas*. The slab above the sanctum is called *garbha muda* and the one covering the chamber above is called *ratna muda* (fig. 4.16).

Despite these common features not all the temples of Telkupi were of the same period. It is significant to note that based on the number of tiers in the base mouldings, the appearance of *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules on the body of these temples and the images found in their sanctum, they have been dated by Mitra.[12] It is very much likely that there might have been

[12]Ibid., p. 54

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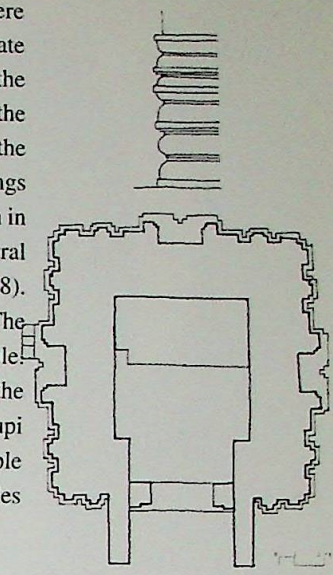
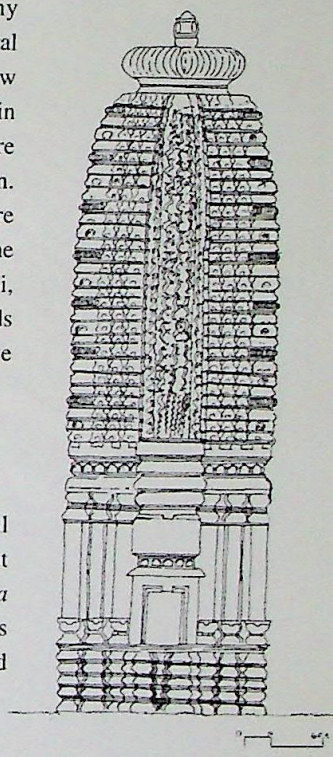
more than twenty-six temples before Beglar surveyed them in 1872-73 and those were from the earlier period built using the Barakar type. Out of the temples surveyed, the date of the earliest temple is ascribed at the end of the ninth century after the construction of the earliest of the Barakar temples and the greatest number of these temples was built in the similar archetype in next two hundred years. The type starting with *triratha* plan of the sanctum evolved into *saptaratha* plan also. Initially there were three tiers in the mouldings which reached up to six in the later temples. The most interesting development was seen in the treatment of the *mandovara* where initially a *valabhi* aedicule was used in the central projection with a niche (see fig. 4.15 of the temple no.16 which is the earliest and drg.4.8). In later temples this place was taken by the *latina* aedicule with an oblong niche. The temple 18 (fig.4.17) shows four tiers of *kapotapali* mouldings anticipating a *latina* aedicule. The *latina* aedicule appeared on the tower of the temple also in twelfth century and the pilasters on the *mandovara* were also stylized as seen on the temple no. 6 of the Telkupi site. The site also had a few structures of the *phamsana* mode used once for the temple sanctum and twice for *jagmohan* of the *latina* shrines. These are discussed with the temples of the *phamsana* mode in chapter six.



Telkupi cannot be regarded as an independent centre of temple building as many contemporary centres of temple building in nearby areas have shown similar architectural characteristics in their temples. In fact, each phase of the Telkupi temples, as we know from the available sources can be seen in other temples of Bengal which are lying in various stages of decay and neglect. The Telkupi type not only developed into a mature form in temple no. 6 of the Telkupi site but it also influenced the architecture of the region. The brick temples built in the region also show parallel development. It is attempted here to place the temples of the region in correct sequence and significance in relation with the developments taken place at Telkupi. Thus, at Banda, six miles south-west of Telkupi, there exists a fairly well preserved temple which resembles temple 18 of Telkupi. In words of Mitra, "Indeed, the correspondence is so close and fundamental that both seem to have been the work of one school of architects."[13]



Banda Temple, Purulia, late tenth century: (See fig. 4.18- 4.24 and drg. 4.6, 4.7)

In the absence of any Telkupi temple, this temple is of utmost importance. It displays all the typical characteristics described above. The frontal *ratha* of the temple is broken but corbelled opening and the doorframe may be seen. There are remains of a detached *mandapa* in front. The *vedibandha* of this temple has six tiers which are projected as per the projections of the pilasters thus resembling *kutastabha*. The posts of the oblong niche also have projected *vedibandha* mouldings similar to the pilasters.

The tall *shikhara* of the temple is divided into seven *bhumis* and each *bhumi* is marked by a circular *bhumi amalaka* at the corners. The *lata* projections on the *shikhara* are also relieved by *gavaksha* patterns like those on the famous Muktesvara temple in Bhubaneswar.

Top to bottom
Drg. 4.6: Ground Plan and Detail of *Vedibandha*, Banda Temple, Purulia, late 10th century.

Drg. 4.7: Side Elevation with details of parts, Banda Temple, Purulia, late 10th century.

This temple of Banda can be dated as per the development in Telkupi and considering the close similarity with temple 18 of the Telkupi site may be ascribed a date of the second half of the tenth century. On the *bhadra* projection of the both sides of the temple, the pediment of the aedicule is sketchily carved with heart shaped *gavaksha* signifying the *valabhi* aedicule. But significantly on the central projection of the backside of the temple, in place of the upper member of the *valabhi* aedicule, there are four rows of *kapotapali*

[13] Ibid., p. 56

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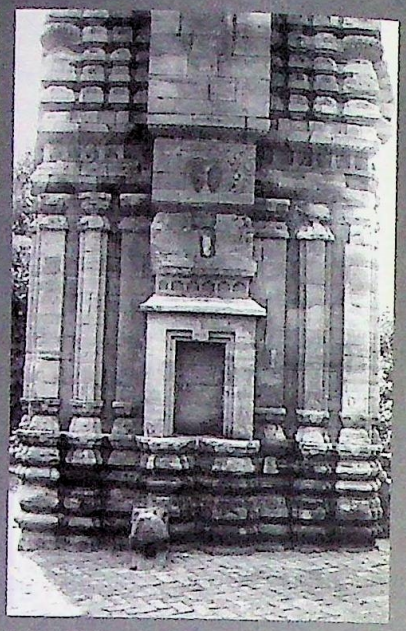

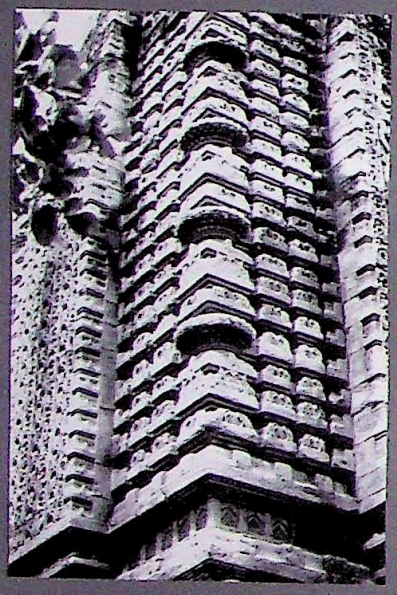

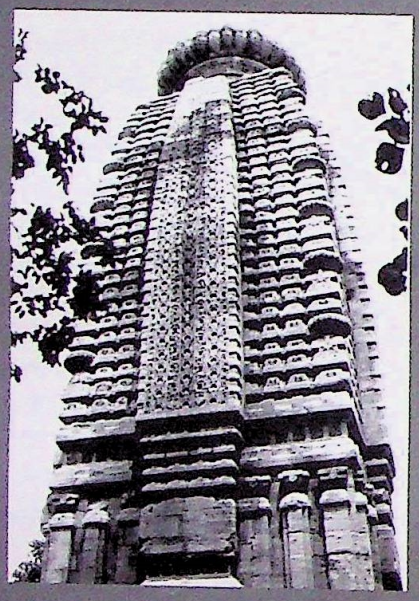

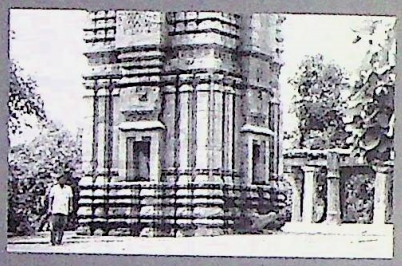

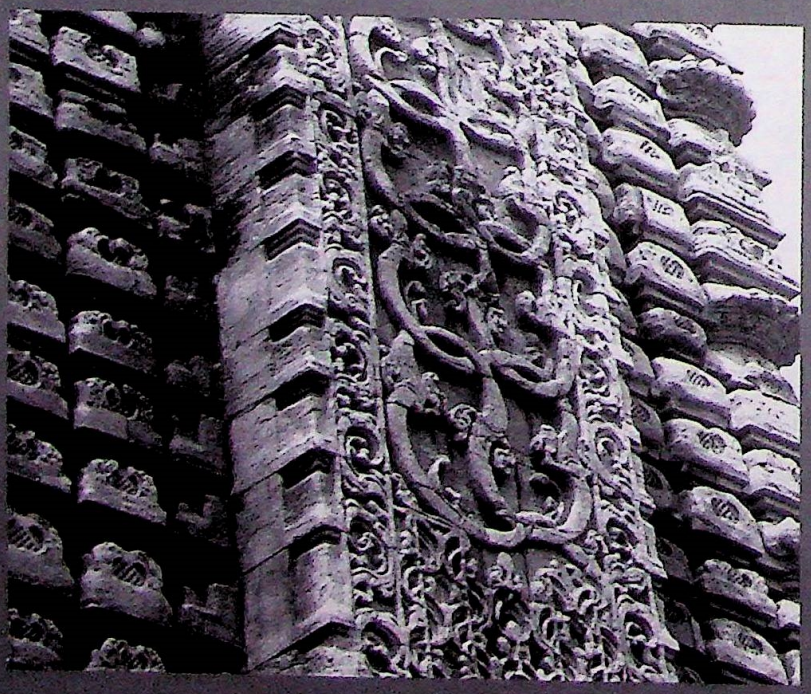

From top left to below right
Fig. 4.18: Banda Temple, Back side Telkupi type, Purulia, late tenth century
Fig. 4.19: Front face with remains of *mandapa,* Banda Temple, Purulia
Fig. 4.20: Details of the *mandovara* on back side, Banda Temple, Purulia
Fig. 4.24: *Varandika* and *karnaratha* with *bhumi amalakas,* Banda Temple, Purulia.
Fig. 4.22: *Shikhara* of back side with *gavaksha* patterns, Banda Temple, Purulia
Fig. 4.21: *Mandovara* on side face with *gavaksha,* Banda Temple, Purulia
Fig. 4.23: *Shikhara* on side with scroll patterns, Banda Temple, Purulia, late tenth century.

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mouldings each divided into four facets. These mouldings possibly anticipated the beginning of the *latina shikhara* miniature which occurs on the later temples in Telkupi no. 6 and 19 datable to the late eleventh century.

Budhpur Temple, Purulia, eleventh century

To the same architectural movement belonged the extinct *panchayatana* temple[14] at Budhpur on the left bank of the Kasai in Purulia district. Mitra studied this temple with a photograph taken by T. Bloch in 1903, and the characteristics similar with Telkupi temples were observed. In Beglar's report[15] the temple is described as *panchaytana* shrine of Siva and with five tiers of the *vedibandha* he ascribed the temple a date of the eleventh century.

The distribution of this temple type of Bengal architecture spreads far beyond the limits of West Bengal. Khiching on the border of Bengal and Orissa, discussed earlier, shows parallel development with Barakar-Telkupi group and can be termed as part of the Bengal temple tradition.

Chandrashekhara temple, Khiching, thirteenth century: (See fig. 4.25, 4.26)

The Chandrashekhara temple at Khiching is restored in upper parts but the lower portion clearly shows strong affinity with the Telkupi temple type in general architectonic form. The temple is *triratha* on plan with a central projection on each side. The *vedibandha* is placed on a two-tiered *pishtha* and the *vedibandha* comprises of three tiers- *khura-kumbha, kalasha, kapotapali* and the *vedi* which is a part of the wall. The *karna* of the *jangha* contains a row of pilasters which have three tiered base and capital. The *varandika* of the restored temple is a single moulding. A recess between *shikhara* and *mandovara* is compartmented by pilasters, which have corbelled capitals supporting the *shikhara*.

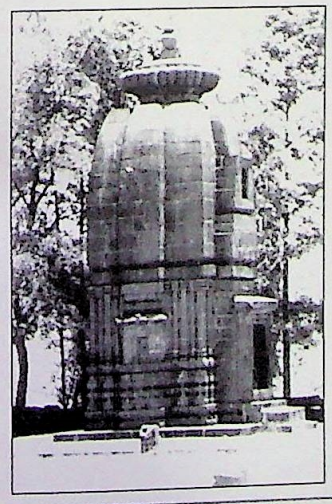
The *shikhara* is largely restored and not divided into *bhumis*. The *lata* projections on three faces of the *shikhara* are plain but the front *lata* has an oblong niche. The *shikhara* is capped by an elegant *amalaka* of large diameter.

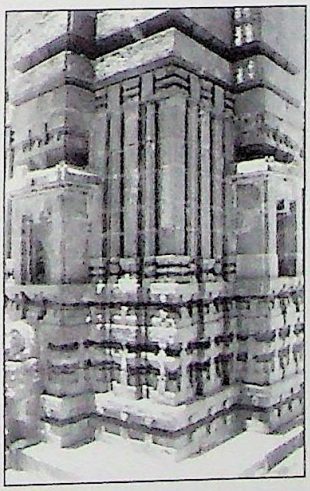
This temple is a subsidiary corner shrine of the Kichakesvari temple and the other three shrines of the *panchaytana* complex are extinct. Many architectural fragments of these

Left to right:
Fig.4.25: Chandrashekhara temple, Telkupi type, Khiching, thirteenth century.

Fig.4.26: Detail of *vedibandha* and *jangha* at corner, Chandrashekhara temple, Khiching, 13th century.

Fig.4.27: The central shrine of the *panchayatana* complex, Kichakesvari temple Khiching, 13th century.





[14] *Panchayatana* temple is a temple with one central shrine on a platform and four smaller subsidiary shrines generally similar at four corners of the platform.
[15] Beglar and Cunningham, 1878, p. 197

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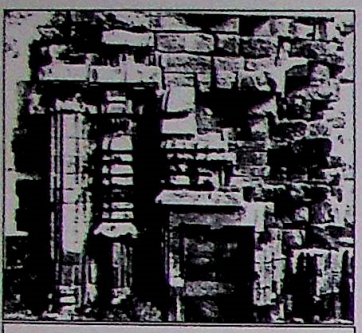
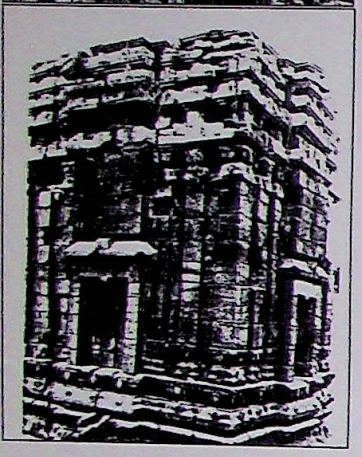




from top
Fig. 4.28: Pakbira Temples, Purulia, 13th century.Telkupi type, Source: ASI, 1960.

Fig. 4.29: Ambikanagar Siva temple, Bankura, 13th century. Source: ASI, 1960.

Fig. 4.30: Boram Siva Temple, Purulia,13th century, *Saptaratha* shrine of Telkupi type.

extinct structures can be seen on the site including a *mastaka* with all other parts of the crowning element of any *latina shikhara*. Considering the above features of the shrine and collected architectural parts it may be said that other three extinct shrines were analogous to the Chandrashekhara shrine.

The Kichakesvari temple (fig.4.27) at Khiching, the central shrine of the *panchayatana* complex is also clearly related with the Telkupi type. However, with the treatment of the base mouldings by vase and vertical bands, its affiliation with Kalinga style is also very clear. In its tall and narrow proportions, never seen at Bhubaneswar the temple is comparable to the old temple at Banda and the temples numbered 17 and 18 at Telkupi. The oblong niches on the frontal *lata* and two upper chambers above the sanctum also display this relationship.[16]

Pakbira Temples, Purulia, thirteenth century

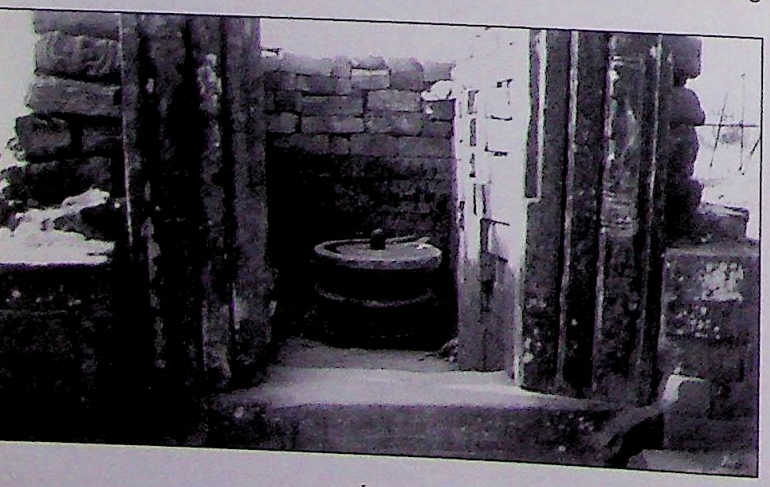
The later phase of the Telkupi archetype as seen in temple no. 19 of the Telkupi site is illustrated by the three *triratha* stone temples at Pakbira[17] about 5 miles north of Budhpur. Their *vedibandha* is also divided into tiers, the two at the base being *khura-kumbha* and *kalasha* and two at the top are *kapotapali* and *vedi*. The *karna* part of the *jangha* has oblong faceted pilasters similar to Banda temple on the outer sides and topped with *latina shikhara* miniature at the inner side. The remaining features of the deteriorated structures are similar to the type but the central projection niche is crowned by a *latina shikhara* (fig. 4.28).

Ambikanagar Siva temple, Bankura, thirteenth century

Ambikanagar is also situated on the bank of the Kasai like Budhpur, Pakbira and Boram and a ruined temple there also shows the characteristics of Telkupi temples like Budhpur. The pilasters may be seen there on the walls of *jangha* and the layout of the shrine is *panchayatana* in resemblance with Budhpur. Here an important feature noted in the *lata* of the *shikhara* is its tiered construction with *kapotapali* shaped mouldings which becomes an important feature of the later temples in Bengal (fig. 4.29).

Boram Siva Temple, Purulia, thirteenth century

Among the sites along the river Kangaswati or Kasai, Boram is of highest architectural importance as it has three surviving brick temples and plinth remains of a large Shiva shrine built of stone. The imposing site of Boram on the right bank of the Kangaswati can be approached from south of Jaypur town on the Purulia-Ranchi highway. The Shiva shrine of stone is intact up to the plinth level with *sivalinga* in the sanctum and remains of a square *mandapa* in front. This is a *saptaratha* shrine similar to the later developments at Para and Barakar. The *vedibandha* of the sanctum is in five tiers and Beglar reported the presence of pilasters on the *jangha*.[18] The doorway of the temple is of



[16] Smith, Walter. "Indian sub., III, 6(i)(d):11th-16th-century indigenous and traditional architecture: East, Vanga." *Grove Dictionary of Art*. London 1996. pp. 320-321.
[17] Beglar and Cunningham, 1878, p.193.
[18] Beglar and Cunningham, 1878, p.184.

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particular interest as hardly any doorways of the period survive on their original position (fig. 4.30). It shows the use of bow motif on a post and lintel doorway as seen on many doorways of the Pala period preserved in the museums discussed in chapter six.

Lakshmi Temple, Para, Purulia, fourteenth century

A late development of the Telkupi type can be seen at Para in district Purulia, twelve miles south-west of Telkupi. The stone temple here is called Lakshmi temple as a mutilated Lakshmi image was reported in this temple in the early part of the twentieth century.[19] The Lakshmi temple at Para, is *saptaratha* on plan and is in very bad state of preservation with details of the stone worn out (fig. 4.31). The top portion and the front part were restored earlier as can be inferred from the different stones. The central *bhadra* projection has a full height *latina* aedicule below the *varandika,* which has an oblong niche also (drg. 4.12). The *vedibandha* of the temple with seven mouldings rests on a narrow *pishta,* the latter also relieved with mouldings (fig.4.32, 4.33). The each successive *ratha* projection has a miniature *latina shikhara* on the *vedibandha*, and on the *jangha* each have a pilaster, round and entwined by a *naga* in case of the first and last and oblong with carved panels in the case of the middle. The busts of these *nagas* appear in the crowning part of these pilasters, which are like *latina kutastambhas* (drg. 4.11).

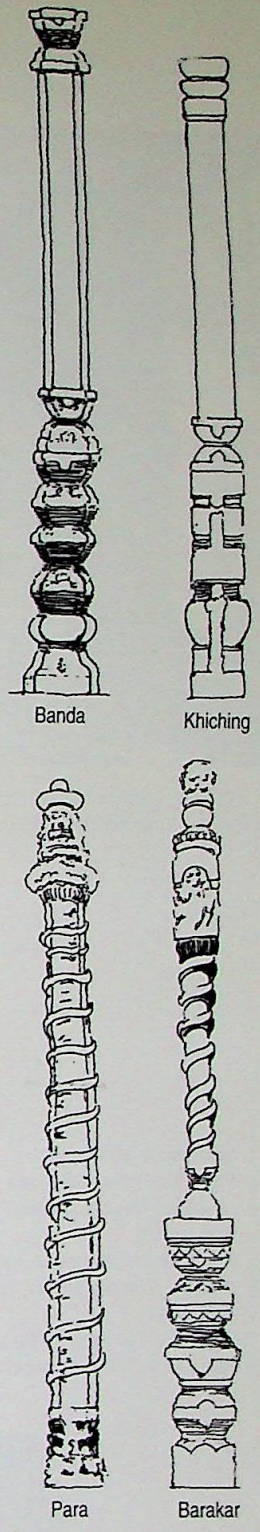
The *pratirathas* of the *shikhara* are made of thin horizontal mouldings but the curvilinear line is broken by conspicuously projected mouldings, similar to the one near the base of the *shikhara* thus marking the stages in the *shikhara*. The each stage of the central *lata* has a miniature *latina shikhara* with sets of vertical bands on either side.

This temple close to Telkupi is a descendant of the same archetype but shows the later development in Bengal architecture with extensive use of the *latina shikhara* in miniature and the absence of *bhumi amalakas* in the *shikhara.* The temple may be ascribed a date of the fourteenth century when pilasters with *naga* entwined also appear in Telkupi temple number 8. In the neighbouring Bankura district, in this period many brick temples were built using *saptaratha* or *navaratha* plan and *latina* aedicules used on the *mandovara* and *shikhara* also.

The above temple at Para, the group of other three temples of Begunia group at Barakar and three temples at Pandra in district Dhanbad are successors of the Temple 6 of Telkupi and shed a very welcome light on the further development of the *latina* mode of temple building in Bengal.

Temple I and II of Barakar, Burdwan, c. 1461 CE

Temple I and II of Barakar seems to be contemporaneous judging from their close affinity with each other. These temples are a part of the group locally known as Begunia in the town of Barakar. They stand in the same walled complex where Siddheshvara Mahadeva temple of the early ninth century is located, not far from the bank of the Barakar, a tributary of the Damodar river. The date of the construction of temple II, the southern one, as gathered



Drg. 4.11: Pilasters on the *jangha* of the temples of the Telkupi type.

[19] As mentioned in Chakrabarty, 1993, p. 135, the image was removed by the kings of Kashipur whose family is said to be the descendants of the rulers of Panchkot kingdom in Sekharbhum.

[20] This inscription may be seen on the right jamb of the entrance of the temple sanctum inscribed in Bengali characters. The inscription is also mentioned in Annual Report of the ASI, 1922-23, p. 110 which reads that the temple was built in *Phalguna* 1382 *Sakabda* (1461 CE). It is also mentioned by McCutchion, David J. *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal- Origins and Classifications.* The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972, p. 22. and Datta, 1975, p.29.

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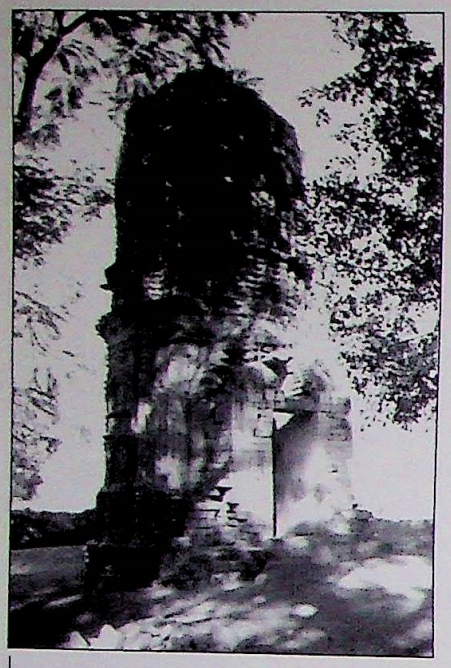
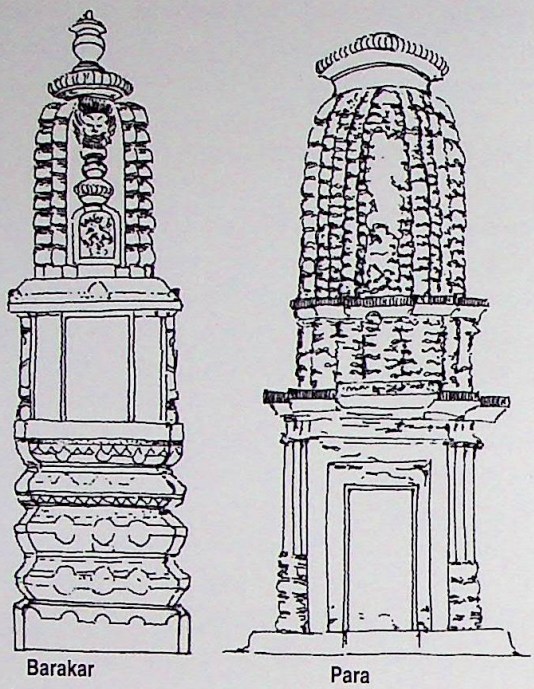
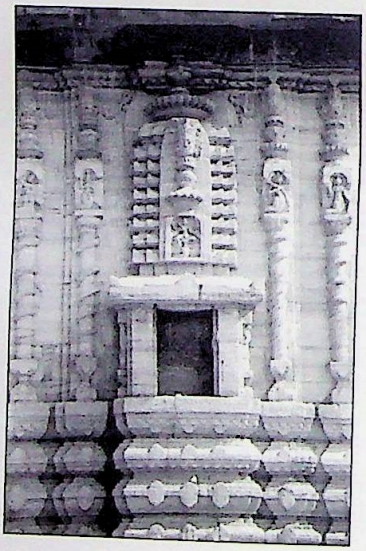


Fig. 4.31: Lakshmi Temple, Para, Purulia, 14th century. Restored front vestibule and top.

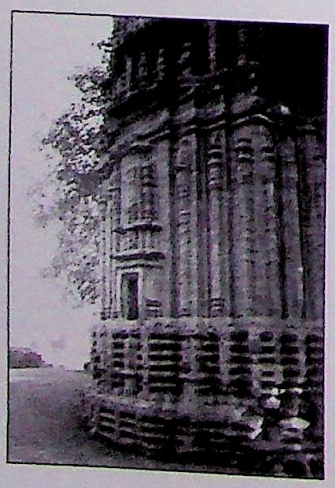


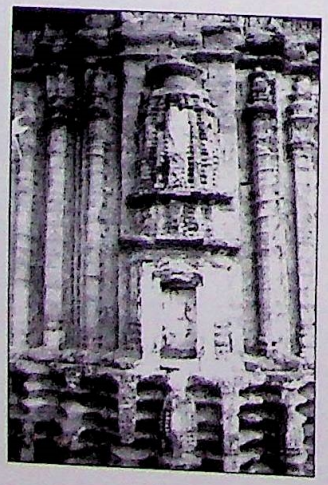
Drg. 4.12: Latina aedicules on the temples of the Telkupi type

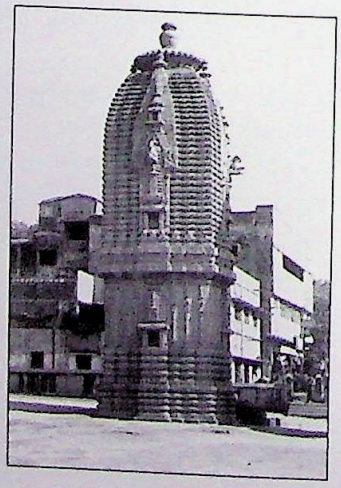


below from left to right
Fig. 4.32: *Pishta, vedibandha* and *pilasters on jangha,* Lakshmi Temple, Para, Purulia, 14th century.
Fig. 4.33: *Latina* aedicule flanked by pilasters, Lakshmi Temple, Para, Purulia, 14th century.
Fig. 4.35: Tall profile of the *shikhara,* Temple I, Barakar, Burdwan, c. 1461 CE

Fig. 4.36: *Latina* aedicule flanked by *naga* entwined pilasters, Temple I, Barakar, Burdwan, c. 1461 CE







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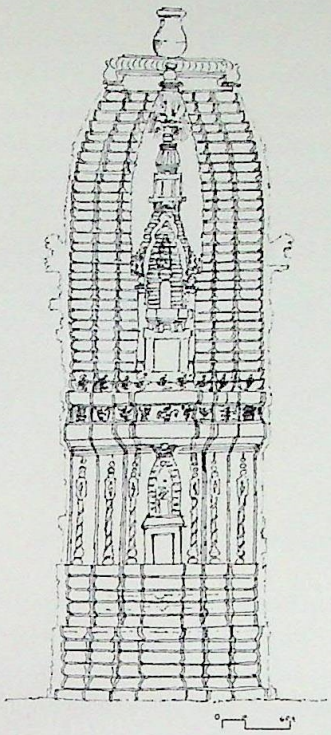
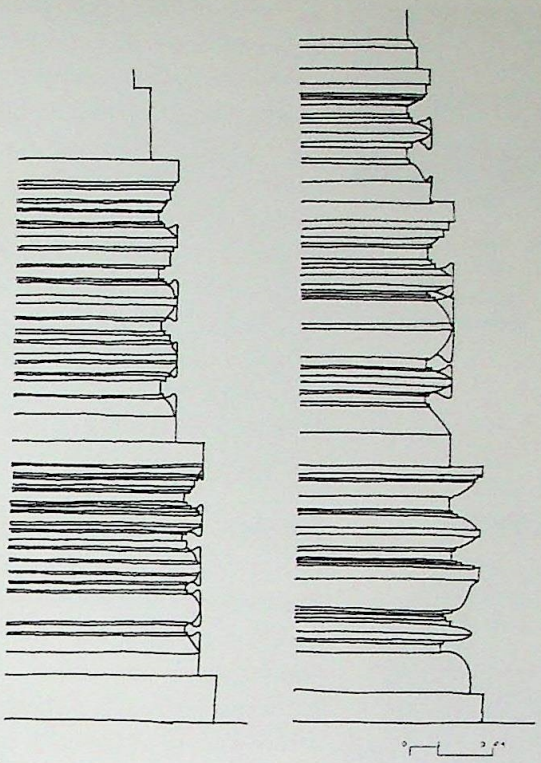


Drg. 4.9: Tall profile of the *shikhara*, Temple I, Barakar, Burdwan, c. 1461 CE



Drg. 4.10: Detail at the base showing *pishta* and *vedibandha*, Temple I and III, Barakar, Burdwan.

from an inscription in the temple is the year 1461CE[20], which further increases the value of these temples in the history of the development of the *latina* temples of Bengal.

These two temples are *saptaratha* on plan on three sides, both having a pronouncedly projected front *bhadra*. The *upana* or platform on which the temple stands is variegated into *saptaratha*. Over it is a *pishta*, *saptaratha* on plan and relieved with five mouldings. The *vedibandha* above *pishta* also has five similar looking mouldings (fig.4.35 and drg. 4.9, 4.10). There are no recesses to separate the *rathas* of the *jangha* though all of them except front *ratha* are embellished with a thin pilaster of a novel kind earlier seen on the Para temple. The *vedibandha* below the thin pilasters is projected as a part of the pilaster thus presenting the concept of a *kutastambha*. Coiled by the tail of a *nagi* above a set of *kapotapali* and *vedi*, these pilasters are crowned by a fierce looking, grinning head above the crowning elements of a crudely fashioned *latina shikhara*. The latter containing the upper part of the *nagi* bust. The *bhadra* projections on three sides have each a *latina* aedicule starting from the ground with an oblong niche (fig.4.36 and drg.4.11, 4.12). The *lata* of the *latina* aedicule is also superimposed by a crude *latina shikhara* with a small niche.

The mouldings of the *varandika* are very pronounced, their projections being more than anything seen on the earlier temples. The pilasters and trellis pattern on the *kantha* of the earlier temples have given place to atlantes, in the posture of supporting the conspicuously projected top moulding of the *varandika* above which the *shikhara* starts (fig.4.39).

Significant developments are introduced on the *shikhara* which rises vertically to a great height and then takes abruptly a semicircular curve near the top, so that the *skandha* is

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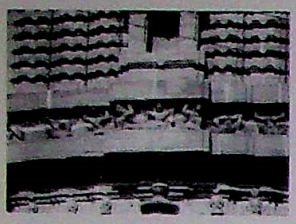

Fig. 4.39: Detail of the *varandika* relieved with atlantes, Temple II, Barakar, Burdwan.

narrower than that of the Telkupi and Banda temples. The *madhyalata* of all the temples are embellished with a miniature *latina shikhara* which is crowned by an *amalaka* and *kalasha*. The *madhyalata* further has two *latina shikhara* superimposed on them, one above the other. The lower *latina* aedicule which is very pronounced on the front face has a lion projecting in a rampant pose (fig. 4.37). On the central front *lata* of the temple II this lion is placed on an elephant as found on the temples of Bhubaneswar. The other details of the temple II are same with some difference in the *latina* aedicule on the *shikhara* (fig.4.38). The most significant change in both these temples from earlier examples is the total absence of *bhumi amalakas*, so that all *rathas* except *latas* are similarly composed with a succession of mouldings. This metamorphosis anticipates the *shikhara* of the later *latina* temples of the late mediaeval period in Bengal called *rekha* temples where *lata* also is fashioned like other *rathas*. This was also observed in the Ambikanagar temple at Bankura. The crowning *amalaka* of these Barakar temples has assumed a smaller appearance with reduced diameter but topped with a *kalasha*.

Fig. 4.37: *Latina* aedicule with rampant lion on *shikhara*, Temple I, Barakar, Burdwan, c. 1461 CE

Temple III of Barakar, Burdwan, fifteenth century

The temple III of the Begunia group, Barakar marks the further development over temples I and II (fig.4.40 and drg.4.10). The mouldings of the *vedibandha* are arranged in such a way that the lower five project beyond the alignment of the upper three and present the appearance of a second *pishta* over the bottom one. The pilasters, with a base of *kapotapali* and *vedi* on the *karna* are of plainer variety and do not run to the entire height of the *jangha*. But the most notable change here is the presence of a *bandhana* like moulding on the *jangha* thus forming a *panchanga mandovara*, an essential feature of the early brick *deuls*, and the *kantha* here has no figures. The *shikhara* of the temple is almost similar to the temple I and II but the *latina* aedicules used here have lost that pronounced volume. The *bhumi amalakas* are absent and the crowning *amalaka* is further reduced in diameter. These fifteenth century temples I, II and III of the Begunia group at Barakar represent a turning point in the history of the temple architecture in Bengal. It represents the culmination of the Telkupi type where after experimentation with *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules on the part of the *mandovara*, the builders were trying them on the *shikhara* with not very satisfactory results. These temples gained from the early brick temples of the region also, in terms of experimentation with temple aedicules. But unlike brick temples, the *valabhi*

Fig. 4.38: Lion on elephant placed on the front face, Temple II, Barakar, Burdwan, c. 1461 CE

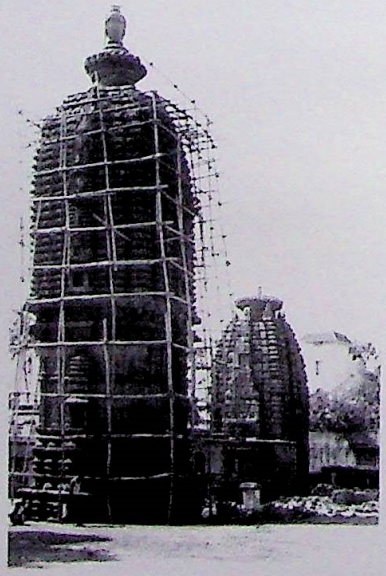

Fig. 4.40: Notice the change in *bandhana* and *vedibandha*, Temple III of Barakar, Burdwan, 15th century

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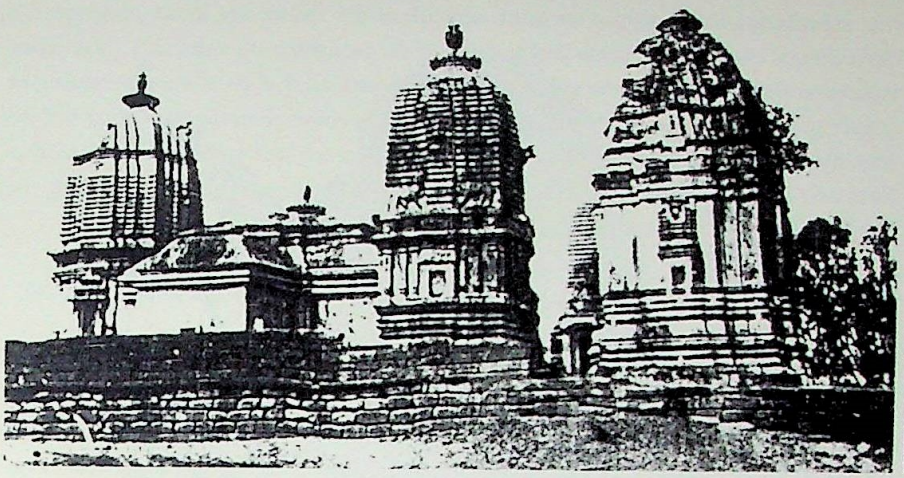

Fig. 4.41: Temple group at Pandra, Dhanbad, sixteenth century.

aedicule with a longer side facing is never used on the stone temples of the Telkupi type. In a few other temples of the late fifteenth century, the *latina* aedicules are not used on the *shikhara* and the *madhyalata* is also merged with *karnarathas* of the *shikhara* by horizontal tiered mouldings.

Temple group at Pandra, Dhanbad, sixteenth century

The three temples at Pandra in district Dhanbad, nine miles north-west of Barakar are *saptaratha* on plan (fig. 4.41). The *karnas* of the *jangha* are decorated with pilasters - oblong with a set of *kapotapali* and *vedi* at the base and capital in two cases and round in case of the third. The *kantha* over the *varandika* is present in all cases, which of only one relieved with figures, some obscene and others in the posture of supporting the superstructure. All the *rathas* of the *shikhara* including *latas* are composed of a series of mouldings, as in the later *rekha* type *(latina shikhara)* temples of Bengal. This feature was earlier observed in the Ambikanagar temple and also on the two Siva temples at Dihar in Bankura explained in the next chapter.

Fig. 4.42: Radha Damodar temple, Ghutgeria, Bankura, 16th century.

Fig. 4.43: Detail of the main entrance Radha Damodar temple, Ghutgeria, Bankura, 16th century

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The experimentation of placing the *latina* aedicule on the *shikhara* of the *latina* temples in West Bengal could not be continued because of the insistence on verticality. The stone temples continued to show the tall profile of the tower even if no horizontal ridging or temple aedicules were used. There were a few changes observed in the finer details of the openings also where multifoliated arches framed in carved panels were seen. A *deul* at Ghutgeria in northern part of Bankura district may said to be an example presenting the link of the Telkupi type with the later brick temples of Bengal.

Radha Damodar temple, Ghutgeria, Bankura, sixteenth century: (fig. 4.42, 4.43)

The tall profile of the *shikhara* of this *pancharatha* shrine is very similar to the later temples at Barakar.[21] The horizontal tiers are not present in this example and one circular corner *amalaka* present the vestiges of the tradition. Four lions in rampant pose are placed on four sides of the *shikhara* that is crowned by an *amalaka* and *kalasha* similar to the Barakar examples. The front face of the sanctum is highly ornate with a pilastered arched entrance framed in a rectangle of carved stone panels depicting the episodes of the *Krishnalila*. These features are very similar to many later terracotta temples of Bishnupur and signify the revival of Vaishnavism in Bengal in the sixteenth century.

The above description and the analysis of the early temples of eastern India cover two temple types- the first seen at Barakar and the other developed at Telkupi. These temple types were spread in far and wide area but never reported from across the Ganga-Bhagirathi, eastern part of Bengal. They represent the presence of the *nagara* tradition of temple architecture in Bengal and highlight the fact that *nagara* temples developed their own regional types all over India under different circumstances. The early brick temples of Bengal used characteristics of both of these types, and developed more complexity in plan with superimposed temple aedicules and in the treatment of the *shikhara*. These brick temples starting from the tenth century later guided a few stone temples also and together with them are studied in the next chapter.¶

[21] Datta, B.K. *Bengal Temples*. New Delhi, 1975, p.30 and plate VIII.

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Shikhara on back side, Banda temple, Purulia

Madhya Lata, Banda Temple, Purulia

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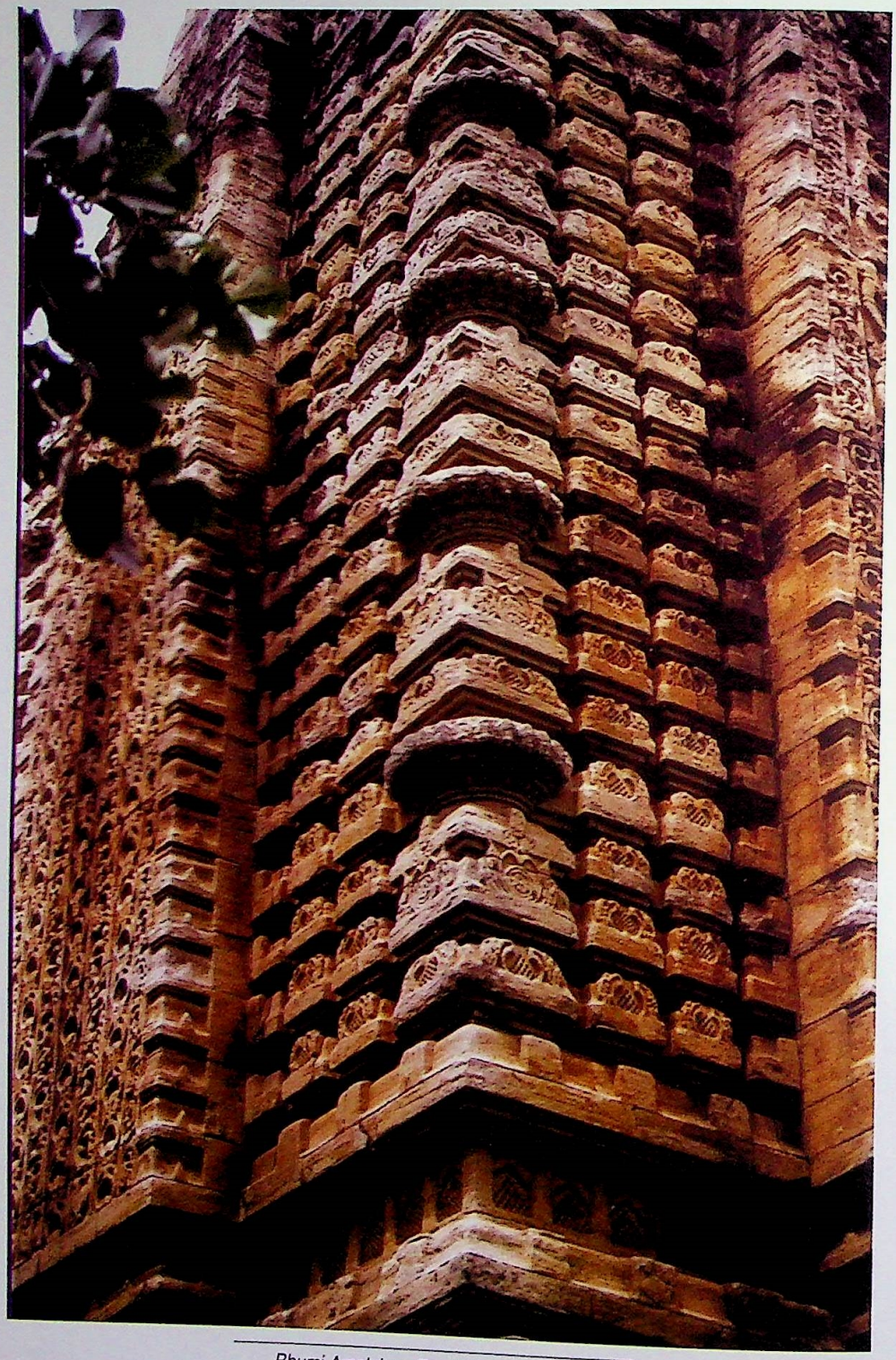

Bhumi Amalakas, Banda Temple, Purulia

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Temple I, Barakar, Burdwan

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Temple II, Barakar, Burdwan

Damodar temple, Ghutgeria, Barjora

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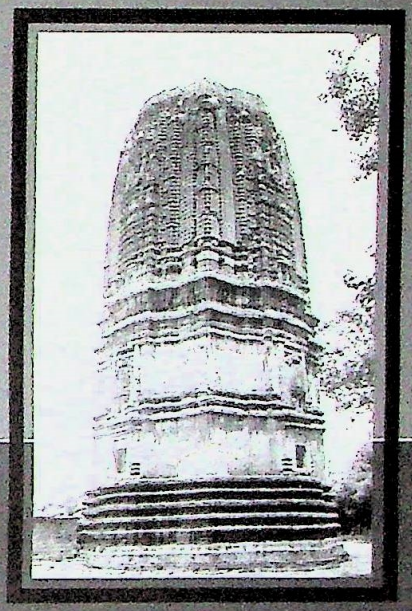

Temple Architecture of Eastern India

Brick-built *Latina* Temples : 9th to 16th century

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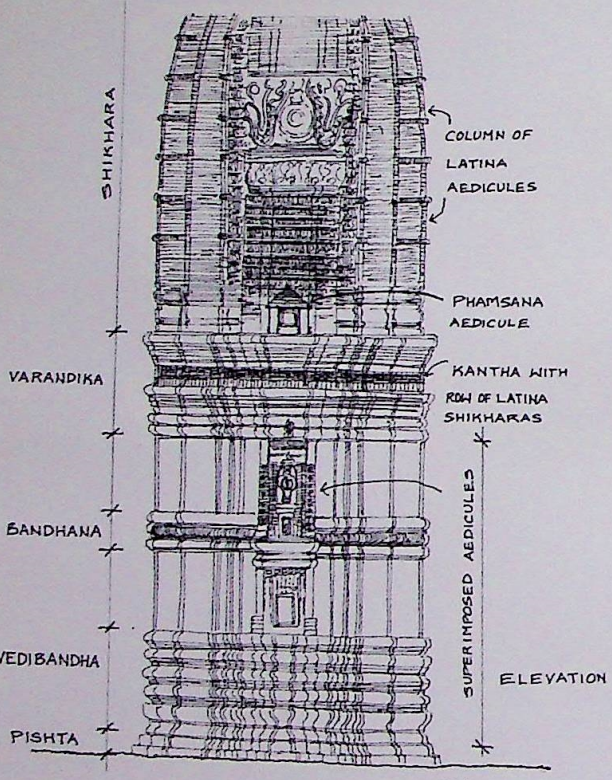
In earlier chapters we have seen that temple building activity in Bengal was going on since Mauryan period, however, we have extant remains of the stone temples only from the beginning of the ninth century, and those of the brick temples only from the tenth century. The earliest surviving brick temples in Bengal are found in Satdeuliya and Gaurangpur in Burdwan district, Sunderbans and Bonshyamnagar in South Twenty-Four Parganas district, Sonatapal and Bahulara in Bankura district and at Boram and Para in Purulia district (see map 4). Most of these early brick temples are part of the same architectural activity, which was current in the eleventh century, and the type reached its zenith in the Bahulara temple at Bankura. Two stone temples at Dihar in Bankura district, covered with stucco plaster like all brick temples, were also part of the same architectural movement and are studied with this group. On the basis of the popular name given to tall brick temples in Bengal, the type may be named as '*Deul* type'[1] of the *latina* mode.

Drg. 5.1: Typical Elevation of a *Deul* type temple of the *latina* mode



The early brick temples of Bengal developed from the rich experience of brick architecture in eastern India where corbelled openings and corbelled domes of the bricks were always in use. In the architecture of eastern India, any vertical surfaces were divided in to alternating flat and recessed panels as found on Nalanda and Rajbadidanga remains.[2] The brick structures were covered by the fine stuccowork, chastely carved over the cut-brickwork and in use since the Gupta period found on the structures of Rajgir, Nalanda and Aphsad.[3]

The extant brick temples in '*Deul* type' of the *latina* mode in Bengal display all the above characteristics and received influences from Magadha and Orissa. Their development in Bengal runs in parallel with the stone temples, gaining many inputs in the process but always retaining their specific characteristics such as the use of stuccowork, the use of *gavaksha* and scroll patterns for finer decoration and the division of *shikhara* in many vertical *latas*. The following description would show that these largely unstudied temples are placed chronologically, but except one at Sunderbans, none of them are securely dated. The sequence is created as per the parallel development of the stone-built temples at Telkupi and in other parts of Bengal with their influences received by the brick temples. However the initial influences to originate the *Deul* type of the *latina* mode came from Magadha, and the Konch temple is many times referred as the model for the early brick temples of Bengal.[4]

As regarding the general characteristics of the early brick temples of Bengal, these are essentially the *latina* shrines of single cell and square plan. Due to their furrowed bases,

[1] 'Deul' word is corrupted form of Sanskrit word 'Devalaya' meaning abode of God.

[2] Deva, Krishna. "Styles of separate lineage: Vanga style, phase 1, c. eighth-ninth centuries A. D., Palas." *Encyclopaedia of Indian Temple Architecture*. Ed. Meister, Michael W. with M. A. Dhaky.Vol. II, part 2, North India, Period of Early Maturity, New Delhi: AIIS; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, chapter 43. pp. 394-407.

[3] Asher, F.M.*The Art of Eastern India, 300 – 800.* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1980. Chapter 4, Bridge to Pala Art (c. 700-800), p.69-101.

[4] McCutchion, David J. *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal- Origins and Classifications.* The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972, p.3

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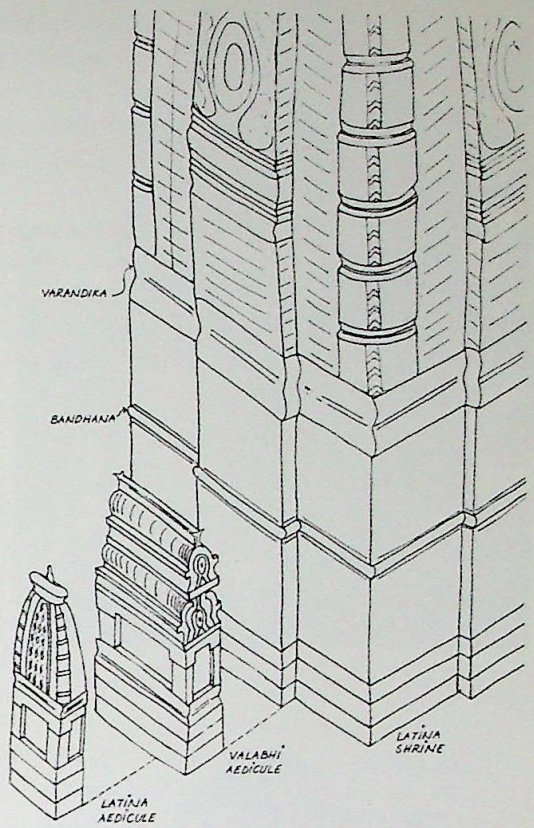
their *vedibandhas* are hard to observe and generalize but with their *jangha* divided in two parts by the *bandhana* mouldings, they all belong to a group with *panchanga mandovara*. The vertical divisions of the wall if any are carried up to the *shikhara* part. In the *shikhara* of these temples a tendency is seen for softening the sharp edges of the *lata, pratilata* and *karnaratha*. With *bhumi amalakas* generally being absent, horizontal tiers and miniature *shikharas* are found on the *karnarathas*. The presence of the bold heart-shaped *gavaksha* on the body of the *shikhara* is one of the most important features of these *latina* temples.



Drg. 5.2: Aedicular composition of a *Deul* type temple of the *latina* mode

The temples of the *Deul* type when analysed with their aedicular components show the use of the *valabhi* aedicules similar to the Telkupi temples of the early period. Unlike the stone temples the brick temples use the *valabhi* aedicule on their *mandovara* with the longer side of the *valabhi* shrine facing. The later examples show the use of the *latina* aedicules placed on the longer face of the *valabhi* aedicule. In much later examples, the *valabhi* aedicules are replaced by the *latina* aedicules which are further superimposed by the smaller *latina* aedicule. A labeled diagram using the elevation of the Bahulara temple explains the type with the aedicules and the various parts (drg.5.1). Another drawing shows the aedicular components of the Deul type and shows the superimposition of *valabhi* shrine on the *mandovara* of the *latina* temple (drg.5.2). The use of the *valabhi* mode, generally a *Shakti* shrine, on the *mandovara* of the *latina* mode temples mainly dedicated to *Shiva*, brings forward the aspect of the union of *Shiva-Shakti*. In Indian religious tradition, it is said that the *Shiva* is incomplete without *Shakti*. Possibly the architectural interpretation of this concept of *Shiva-Shakti* is expressed by superimposing the *valabhi* shrines on the *latina* shrine.

To understand and analyse these temples a similar method to that in the last chapter is being used. However, it is to be mentioned that none of the early temples covered in this group is completely intact and most of them are in a very dilapidated state. It is noted here with regret that the earliest temple of the group at Boram, studied in January 2002 was washed away before this volume was written, but the other two temples at the same site could be saved and are being restored by the State Government.

Deuliya Temple, Satdeuliya, Burdwan, 10th century

Deuliya near Memari in Burdwan district seems to have been an active centre of temple building during the tenth century as there are many mounds of the stone debris and it is said that there were seven temples adorning the site giving Satdeuliya name to the village. The only surviving shrine on this site may be the earliest extant brick temple in Bengal datable to the middle of tenth century.

In this brick temple at Deuliya one may see the general characteristics of the *latina* temples of this type (drg.5.3). The ground plan of the temple is *pancharatha* with two more projections on the *karnas* of the *mandovara*. There are no niches, aedicules or pilasters attached to the *jangha* of the temple, however, the central projection is bolder than the

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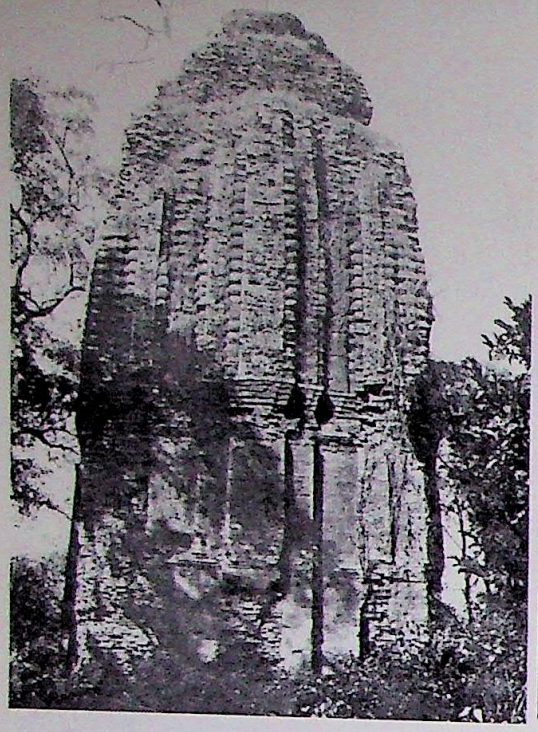

Fig. 5.1: Deuliya Temple, Satdeuliya, Burdwan, Side Elevation (Before Restoration) *Latina* mode, *Deul* type, 10th century.

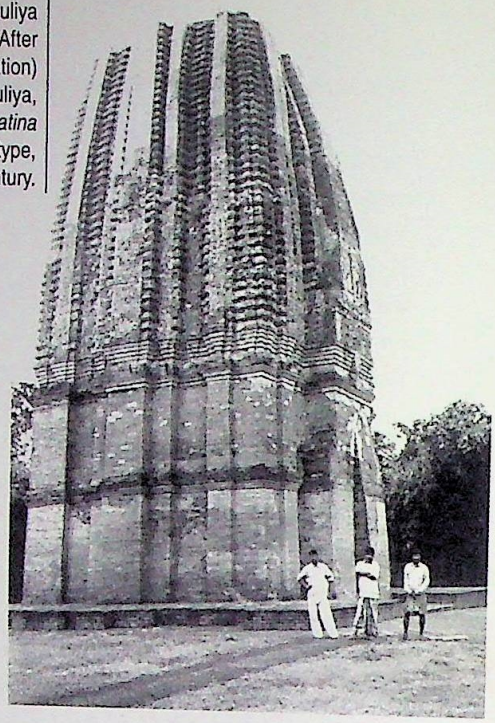

Fig. 5.3: Deuliya Temple, (After Restoration) Satdeuliya, Burdwan, *Latina* mode, Deul type, 10th century.

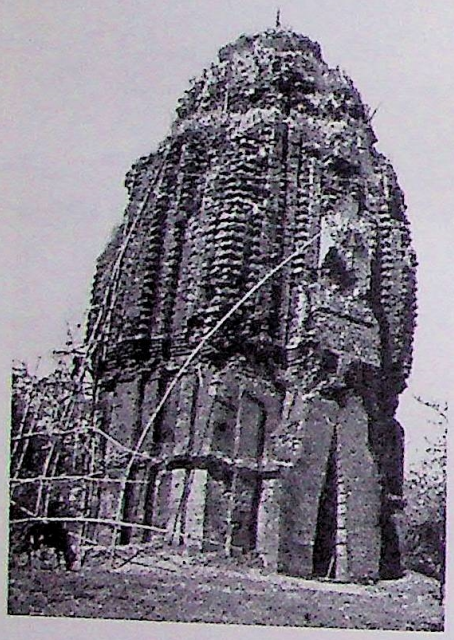

Fig. 5.2: Deuliya Temple, Satdeuliya, Burdwan, Front Elevation (Before Restoration) 10th century. (Source: ASI Kolkata circle)

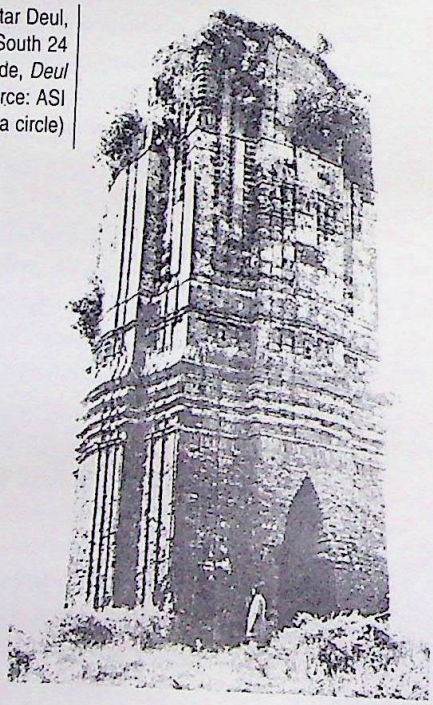

Fig. 5.6: Jatar Deul, Sunderbans, South 24 Parganas, *Latina* mode, *Deul* type, c. 975 CE. (source: ASI Kolkata circle)

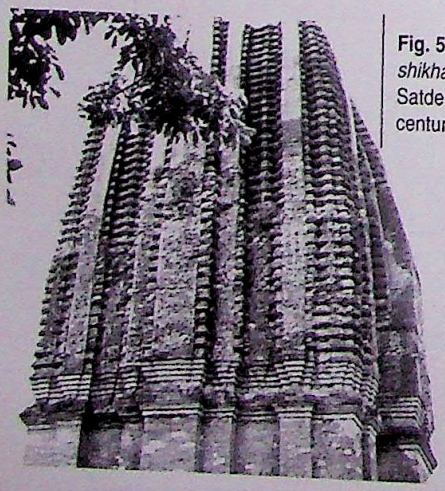

Fig. 5.4: Detail of the *shikhara*, Deuliya Temple, Satdeuliya, Burdwan, 10th century.

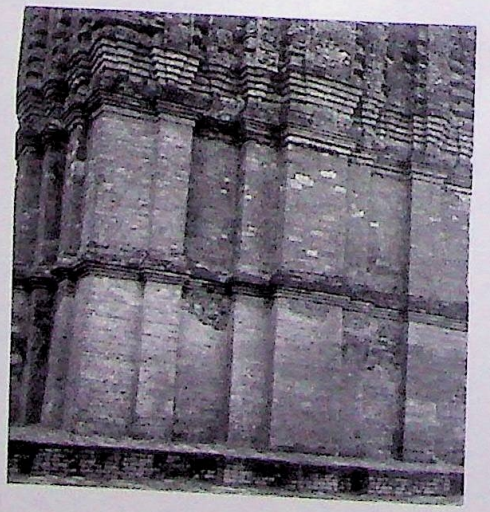

Fig. 5.5: Detail of the *mandovara*, Deuliya Temple, Satdeuliya, Burdwan, 10th century.

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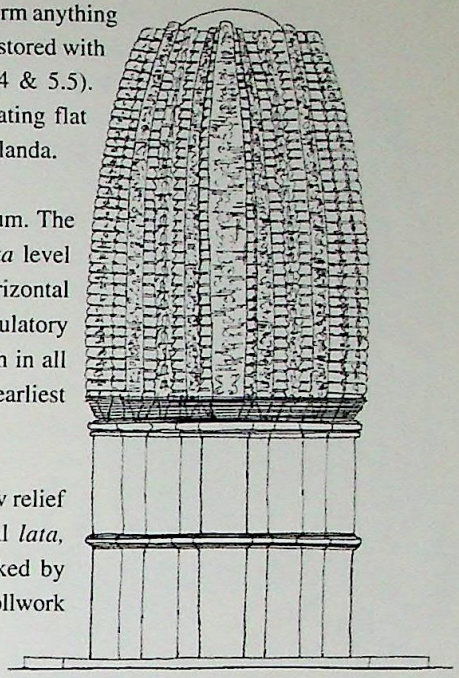
others. The *vedibandha* part of the *mandovara* was too furrowed to inform anything (See fig. 5.1 and 5.2 of Un-restored temple). Now the temple base is restored with vertical base without any traces of the base mouldings (fig.5.3, 5.4 & 5.5). However, the restored *mandovara* reminds us the tradition of alternating flat and recessed panels on the vertical walls of the brick structures at Nalanda.

There are remains of a *bandhana* moulding on the body of the sanctum. The cube of the sanctum ends in a series of inverted offsets at *varandika* level forming a broad support for the tower. The remains of a continuous horizontal recess led Saraswati[5] to suggest that possibly there was a circum-ambulatory around the temple sanctum. This recess is essentially a *kantha* as seen in all early temples of eastern India including Telkupi but was absent on the earliest temple at Barakar.

The tower has an emphatic and unbroken contour and is covered by low relief patterns of the interlacing *gavaksha* windows all over. The central *lata, pratirathas* and *karnarathas* are decorated with a central strip flanked by *kapotapali* shaped mouldings. The central strips of these *rathas* have scrollwork as seen on the *latas* of the Banda temple and reported on some of the Telkupi temples. The remains of the carved *gavaksha* patterns in stuccowork may also be seen on the tiers of the *shikhara*. These patterns of *gavakshas* are formed with composition of split halves of *gavaksha* crowned by *gavakshas* as seen on the Konch and Deo temple. The front face also had a bold heart-shaped *gavaksha* on its *shikhara* which is very crudely restored. The character of the crowning elements could not be ascertained due to the damaged and restored state of the temple.



Drg. 5.3: Side Elevation of Deuliya Temple, (After Restoration) Satdeuliya, Burdwan, 10th century.

Jatar Deul, Sunderbans, South 24 Parganas, c. 975 CE

The next brick temple in the series, known as Jatar Deul, in the Sunderbans is traditionally connected with an inscription (not traceable now) of one Raja Jayantachandra, issued in c. 975 CE.[6] If this date is correct the temple must have been built after Deuliya temple and might have acted as a model for the temples at Boram and Bahulara, hence, may be placed as second temple in this series. Modern conservation has obliterated its original shape and the features but comparing it with other temples many of them may be identified (fig. 5.6).

The *Deul* reaches up to a height of 100 feet above the ground and rises from a *triratha* plan. The plinth mouldings are not visible and might have undergone restoration. The central projections on the *mandovara* do not have any miniature *shikharas*. The inside of the sanctum is a square space of ten feet width with the floor some six feet below the present level of the ground. The outer facade of the each of its sidewalls or *karnas* is broken into shallow offsets without any decoration. The *jangha* is capped by a series of three mouldings over which a deep recess forms *kantha*. The tower starts above the upper projected moulding of the *varandika*.

Much of the character of the tower is lost but the use of very small miniature *shikharas* in rows can be seen on the central *latas* of the *shikhara*. The corners of the tower have some original remains that clearly show the use of tiers as found on the Satdeuliya temple. The *madhyalata* also show some vertical strips with *gavaksha* patterns and stucco remains.

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[5] Saraswati, S. K. *Architecture in Bengal,* Bharadwaj & Co., Calcutta, 1976, p. 58

[6] Datta, Kalidas. *Monograph no. 5*, Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi, March, 1934.

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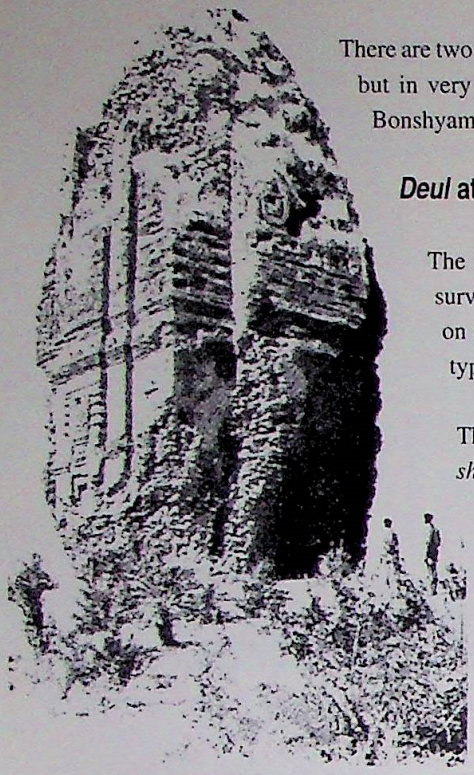


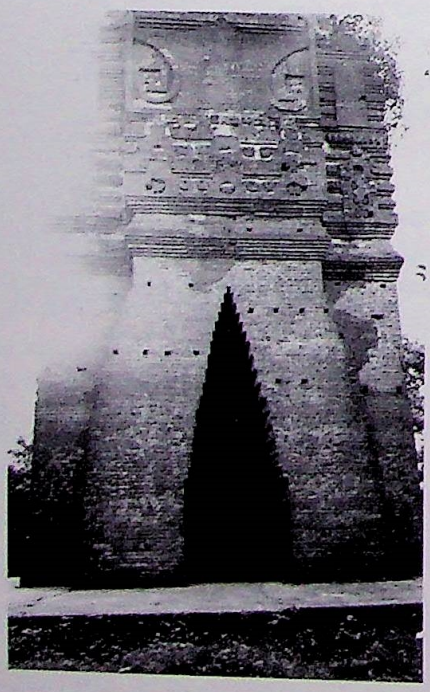
There are two more brick temples in South 24 Parganas district of the similar character but in very bad state of preservation. They are at Delbari near Jaynagar and at Bonshyamnagar in Mathurapur Police station and show the popularity of the type.

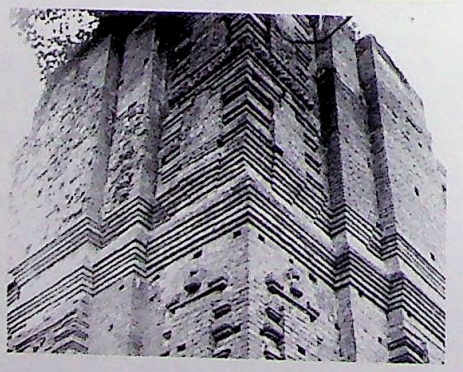
Deul at Sonatapal near Baliara, Bankura, late 10th century

The *Deul* at Sonatapal near Baliara in Bankura seems to be the earliest surviving structure in the Bankura district. It shows the use of *latina* aedicules on the *karnarathas* of the *mandovara* in close resemblance with Barakar type.

This restored brick temple rises up to fifty feet, above which, much of the *shikhara* has disappeared (fig.5.7). A bold *gavaksha* motif above three smaller *gavakshas* may be seen above the entrance vestibule. The temple is *pancharatha* in plan on all sides except in front which is *triratha*, resting on a plain restored plinth (fig.5.8, 5.9, 5.10). The sanctum is a square chamber of twelve feet side with corbelled top and no trace of any deity approached by a corbelled vestibule. On each face of the sanctum, miniature *shikharas* are placed on the *bhadra* projection above an empty niche and on the two side *karnas* projections. While miniature *latina* shrines can be clearly observed as aedicules on the *karnas* but the pediment on the top of the niche on *bhadra* projection appears to be a representation of the *valabhi* aedicule. In the old photograph before restoration (fig.5.7), the *valabhi* aedicule can be observed from the side and the vertical profile of the tower of this aedicule amply suggests it to be the *valabhi* aedicule. It is of great significance in the history of Bengal temple architecture when we observe the *valabhi* aedicule with longer side facing in the central projection and the *latina* aedicules on the *karnas*.

Fig. 5.7 *Deul* at Sonatapal near Baliara, (Before Restoration) Bankura, late 10th century.





Clockwise
Fig. 5.8: Restored Front face, *Deul* at Sonatapal

Fig. 5.9: *Valabhi* and *Latina* aedicules on side face, *Deul* at Sonatapal, late 10th century.

Fig. 5.10: *Bhumi amalaka* and *gavakshas* on *shikhara*, *Deul* at Sonatapal, late 10th century.

[7] Biswas, S.S., Haque Z. *Terracotta Temples of Bengal*. Calcutta, 1995, Appendix 4, p.56.

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Due to the restored plinth *vedibandha* of the temple can not be observed, as was the case with the Deuliya temple but the remains of an intermediate *bandhana* moulding on the *jangha* and *varandika* with the stepped courses above and below the *kantha* can be observed. The *shikhara* starts with a slight inward curvature with *rathaka* projections carried up to the top. The central *lata* and *pratirathas* have intricately carved scroll patterns on brickwork in the similar manner as seen on the Deuliya and Banda temples. In a departure from the general features of the 'Deul type' and as a display of the affinity with the Barakar type, the *karnarathas* on the corners of the tower show the use of *bhumi amalakas*, which are square. An elegant *venukosha* is formed between the two *bhumi amalakas* using the *gavaksha* patterns.

The Sonatapal temple situated on the bank of the Dwarakeswar river is said to be dedicated to Surya.[7] One important feature of this fine temple is the use of the *gavaksha* patterns above the entrance, on top of the *varandika*, on the *latas* of the miniature *shikharas* and on *bhumi varandis* of the *karnaratha*, on the *shikhara* forming the *venukosha*. The *gavaskshas* used here are of the similar geometry as seen on the Sun temples at Deo, Umga and Konch in the Magadha region mentioned in chapter three. With this temple, the *Deul* type attains maturity, which reaches on to its climax at Boram in Purulia district.

Boram Temples, Purulia, 11th century

The type shows further development in Purulia district where the historical remains are scattered all over along the river routes. Among the sites along the river Kangaswati, Boram is of highest architectural importance as it has three surviving brick temples and the plinth remains of a large Siva shrine built of stone. The imposing site of Boram on the right bank of the Kangaswati can be approached from south of Jaypur town on the Purulia-Ranchi highway. The site is impressive with three surviving temples standing not in any alignment and there are some modern constructions housing basalt images[8] found on the site. However J. D. Beglar visited this site in 1872[9] but due to its remote location the site remained neglected and undocumented.

Temple I, Boram, Purulia, early 11th century

The northern-most temple built of bricks is the most impressive specimen right at the bank of river, measuring 28 feet east west and 24 feet north south on the outside. The temple may be ascribed a date of the early eleventh century as this eighty five feet high imposing temple built of bricks shows further development of the Sonatapal shrine of the late tenth century. Together with the temple II and III, the temples at Boram also show direct Magadhan influence in the treatment of the *shikhara* with large heart–shaped *gavaksha* found earlier on the *latina* temples at Konch, Deo and Umga (fig. 5.15, 5.16).

The inner sanctum chamber of the *deul* is small twelve feet wide square space corbelled at the top as in all other temples of this period with no trace of any deity (fig. 5.13). The ground plan is *saptaratha* but with only one bold projection in the centre that gives the appearance of a *triratha* plan. The five-fold division of the cubical section i.e. *panchanga*

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[8] The images found on the site include one ten armed Mahisasurmardini and Ganesha. These are described in detail by Chakrabarti, Dilip K.
Archaeology of Eastern India: Chhotanagpur plateau and West Bengal. New Delhi, 1993, p. 133-136.

[9] Beglar, J. D. and Cunningham, A. *Report of a Tour through the Bengal Provinces, Archaeological Survey of India,* volume 8, Calcutta.1878 and Reprint New Delhi. 2000, p.184.

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Fig. 5.11: 85 feet tall Deul, Temple I, Boram, Purulia, early 11th century.

Fig. 5.12: Furrowed front face and post of the doorway, Temple I, Boram, early 11th century.

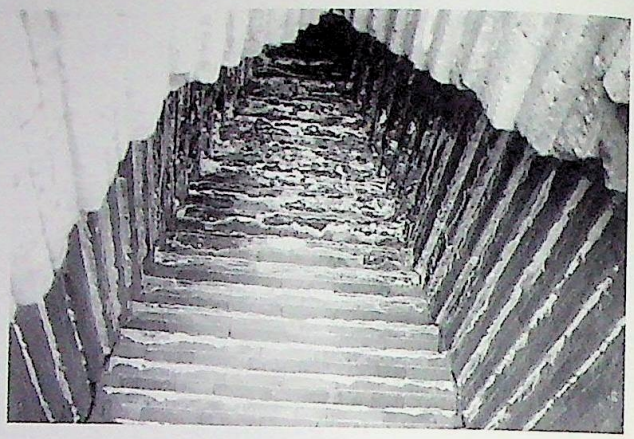

Fig. 5.13: Inner sanctum corbelled by bricks, Temple I, Boram, early 11th century.

Fig. 5.14: *Valabhi* and *latina* aedicule on *mandovara*, Temple I, Boram, early 11th century.

Fig. 5.15: Heart shaped *gavaksha* crowning the niche, Temple I, Boram, early 11th century.

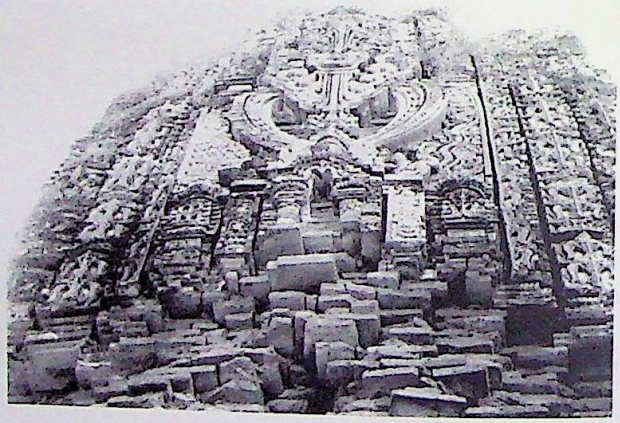

Fig. 5.16: *Gavaksha* survives on the side facing river, Temple I, Boram, early 11th century.

mandovara, may be seen with miniature temple aedicules on the central *bhadra* projection capping a niche on three sides (fig.5.11, 5.14). A horizontal *bandhana* moulding divides the cubical section and after the *varandika* moulding, the tower starts. The *bhadra* projection here is actually a *valabhi* aedicule starting from the ground like the Sonatapal temple. But here the *valabhi* aedicule is superimposed by a *latina* aedicule whereas the *latina* aedicules are not used on the *karnas*. The *vedibandha* consists of many tiers of mouldings with *kalasha* seen as second tier at places, but the base of the temple is too furrowed to give their type and number. The entrance vestibule is damaged but the central doorway is a corbelled opening with a part of one stone post surviving showing the size of the vestibule (fig. 5.12).

The side facing the river is deeply furrowed at the bottom but fine and intricate stucco

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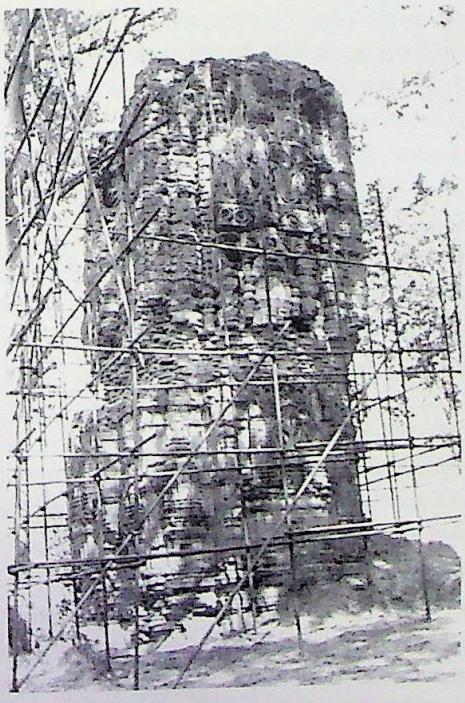
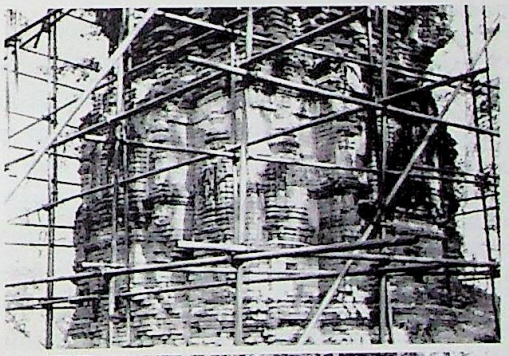
ornamentation survives at the middle part of *shikhara*. The ubiquitous heart-shaped *gavaksha* crowned by a *kirtimukha* is the only decorative part left on this damaged shrine together with miniature *latina shikharas* at many places. A small multi-foiled arched niche with an image is used below the heart-shaped *gavaksha*. The *karnaratha* part of the *shikhara* shows the use of a series of miniature *latina shikhara* one over other forming a column but *bhumi amalakas* are not used here. Due to this arrangement of the *latina* aedicules placed one above other, Adam Hardy in an informal discussion termed these temples as 'quasi *bhumija*' of the *nagara* tradition. The lion-face or *kirtimukha* and hanging pearl string band is used below the *varandika* cornice as in other contemporary temples carved in stuccowork.

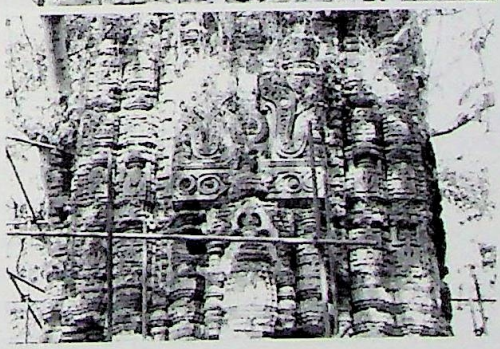
(The temple described above collapsed in the rains of 2002 and washed away in floods after the above study was made) The other two temples on the Boram site seem to belong to a later date than the temple I, but follow general characteristics.

Boram Temple II and III, Boram, Purulia, 11th century

The other two brick temples of the Boram group are further development of the Sonatapal Deul on which the *latina* aedicules on *jangha* and the *valabhi* aedicule on *bhadra* projection were found. These are square shrines with almost twenty feet side, *triratha* on plan, *bhadra* projection coming out boldly accommodating an elegant *valabhi* aedicule superimposed by an ornate *latina* aedicule. Two pilasters on both sides, one above the *vedibandha* and the other above the *bandhana* moulding, flank this composition. These pilasters are oblong and have *kapotapali* and *vedi* at the base but at the top the pilaster is crowned by an *amalaka* and *kalasha*. These display the development of the pilasters on the *jangha* from what was seen on the Banda temple near Telkupi (fig. 4.8).







Clockwise
Fig. 5.17: Temple II, Boram, (Under Restoration) Purulia, 11th century.
Fig. 5.18: *Valabhi* and *latina* aedicule on *mandovara*, Temple II, Boram, 11th century.
Fig. 5.19: Large *Gavaksha* pattern on *shikhara*, Temple II, Boram, 11th century.

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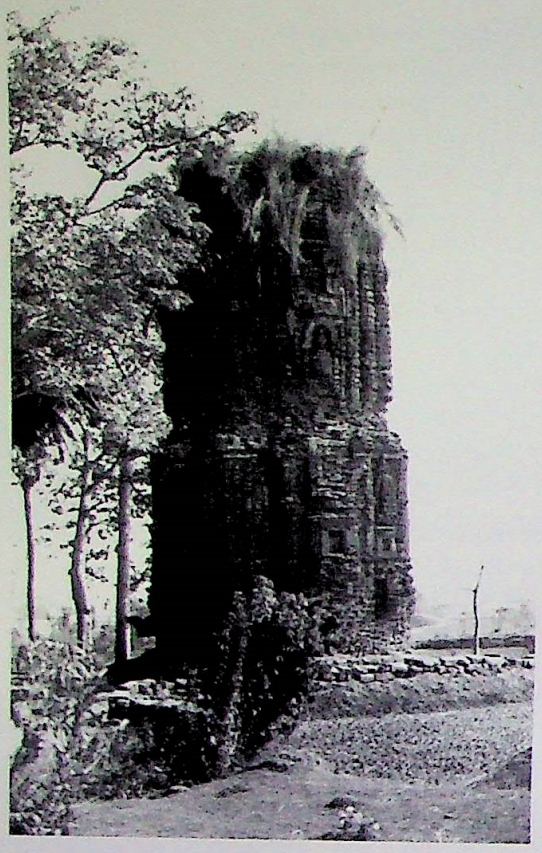

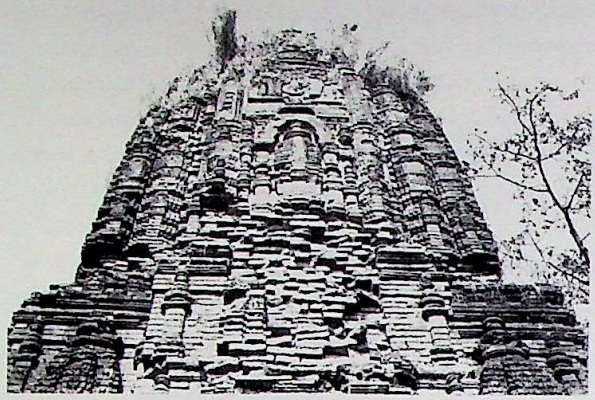

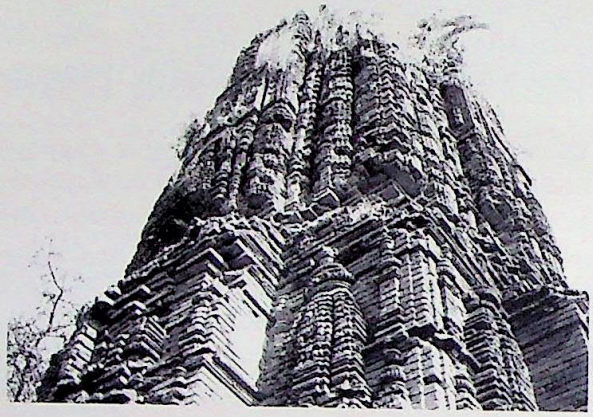

Clockwise

Fig.5.20: Temple III, Devoid of any plaster, Boram, Purulia, 11th century.

Fig.5.21: *Latina* aedicule on *shikhara*, Temple III, Boram, Purulia, 11th century.

Fig.5.22: *Latina* aedicule on *Karna* of *mandovara*, Temple III, Boram, Purulia, 11th century.

The *latina* aedicules are also placed on each *karna* projection of the *mandovara* which are smaller than the most ornate and large central *latina shikhara* as in the Barakar type (fig. 5.17, 18, 19 for temple II). In temple III, pilasters as on the central *bhadra* projection are also seen on the both sides of the *latina* aedicule placed on the *karnas* of the *jangha*. In the same temple III, *vedibandha* can be seen with three tiers namely *khura-kumbha, kalasha* with curved top and *kapotapali* (fig. 5.20, 21, 22 for temple III). An elegant *bandhana* moulding runs in the middle of the *jangha* discontinued on the aedicules. A projected moulding above the row of stucco carved motifs marks the *varandika* above which the tower rises with a slight inward curve from the start. Unlike temple I, both these temples are *triratha* on plan and remains so till the top of the *varandika*, above which the *shikhara* of these temples have a rounded profile with five segments - central *lata* flanked by *pratirathas* and *karnarathas* on both sides. Following another characteristics of the Barakar type, the divisions on the *shikhara* of these temples do not fully correspond to the *triratha* projections on the *mandovara*.

The *shikharas* of the temples are profusely carved in brickwork and were covered by fine stuccowork. Above the central *latina* aedicule placed on the *jangha*, an ornate miniature *shikhara* is placed on the *shikhara* also on all four sides, framed in a hepta-foil niche. This elegant composition is flanked by oblong carved pilasters and a column of the miniature *latina* aedicules placed one above the other. The *pratiratha* and *karnaratha* of the *shikhara* are also similarly decorated with columns of the *latina* aedicules but the *bhumi amalakas* are absent on the corners. The composition on the central projection is capped by an extremely ornate large *gavaksha*. The similar composition on the later Bahulara temple has many rows of miniature *latina shikhara* below the large *gavaksha*, but here this looks more elegant and balanced. The *latina* aedicule on the *shikhara* of these two temples may be considered as a *latina* shrine starting from the ground as per Hardy's theory of aedicular

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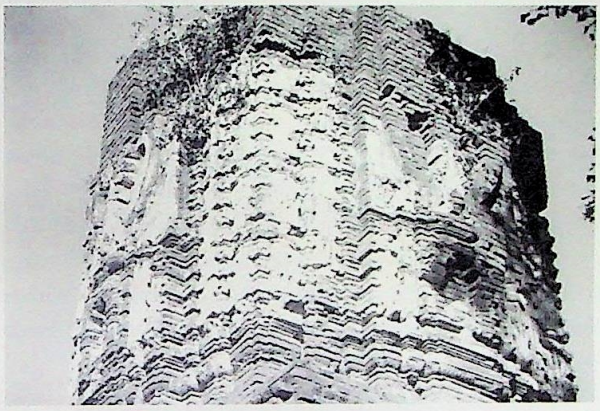

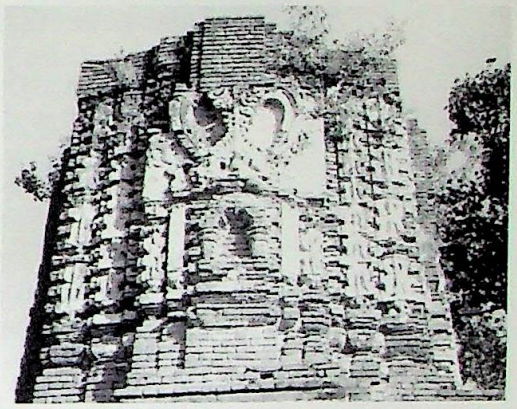

composition of the *nagara* shrines.[10] However, the smaller size of the central *latina* aedicule on the *shikhara* shows that the builders in Bengal were aware about the concept of the *Sekhari* shrines and their composition within the *nagara* tradition, but in their attempt to maintain the tall profile of *deuls* in Bengal they resisted the placing of full aedicule on the sides of the *latina mulaprasada*.

Both the temples are almost identical but one damaged more than the other. The fine brick ornamentation, however damaged, may be one of the best in entire Bengal. Fine stucco ornamentation survives only on one temple with popular motifs of the lion-face and hanging pearl strings, the heart-shaped *gavakshas*, other *gavaksha* patterns, arched niches and scroll patterns. These two temples with their use of aedicules on the *mandovara* and *shikhara* parts clearly demonstrate the development of the *Deul* type of *latina* mode in eastern India further from Boram I and Sonatapal temple.

Clockwise
Fig. 5.23: Durga temple, Para, Purulia, with restored front, *Latina* mode, *Deul* type, 11th century.

Fig.5.24: Stuccowork remains on the *shikhara*, Durga temple, Para, Purulia, 11th century.

Fig. 5.25: Heart shaped *gavaksha* crowning the niche, Durga temple, Para.

Fig. 5.26: *Latina* aedicules on the *pratiratha* and *karnaratha*, Durga temple, Para, Purulia, 11th century.

Durga temple, Para, Purulia, 11th century: (fig. 5.23-5.26)

In the northern part of the Purulia district, on a low mound in the village of Para, two temples, one of brick and the other of stone still survive almost side by side facing south. Very similar to the Boram temples, the Durga temple at Para on the west, is built of bricks and is presently called Chandi Mandir. Its similarity with Boram temples display the spread of the tradition which is significant as Para and Boram were not the part of one secondary state and Para was closer to Telkupi. It shows evidence of considerable restoration and is

[10] Hardy, Adam. "Sekhari Temples." *Artibus Asiae*, The Museum Rietberg, Zurich. Vol. LXII, No.1, 2002, pp. 81-137. and also see the chapter three for explanation of aedicular components of the latina shrines.

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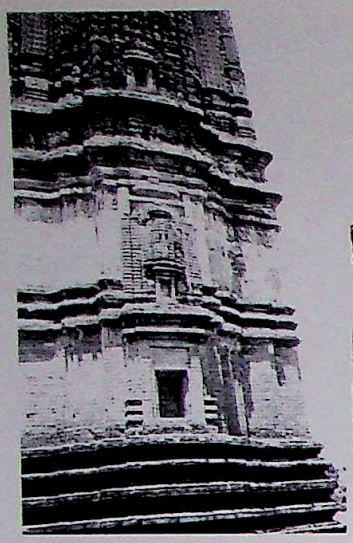

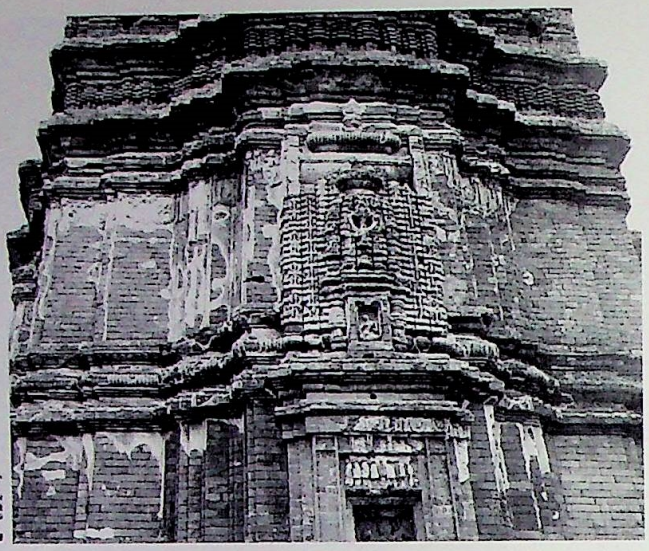

Clockwise
Fig. 5.28: *Panchanga mandovara* with *bandhana*, Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, late 11th century.

Fig. 5.29: Detail of *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules on *bhadra*, Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, late 11th century.

18 feet wide and 21 feet long after the restoration of the front part of the entrance vestibule. The ground plan of the sanctum is in *triratha* form with central *bhadra* projection coming out as a *valabhi* aedicule in a manner similar to the Boram II and III temples. The *latina* aedicules may be seen on both sides of the *bhadra* projection on *karnas* in a smaller size. On the *jangha* of the temple a *bandhana* moulding divides it into two parts discontinuing over the aedicules. In this temple also the *valabhi* aedicules on the *bhadra* projection are flanked by two pilasters on both sides, a pair above the *vedibandha* and another above the *bandhana* moulding. These pilasters are oblong and similar to the ones seen on the Boram II and III temples.

The decoration of the tower is profuse like the temples of Boram and fine stuccowork has survived the ravages of time. The top part of the *shikhara* tower has also undergone some repair, and so it is difficult to see proper profile of the temple tower. We may see the ubiquitous heart-shaped *gavaksha* on top of a small four-foiled arched niche like the temple I of Boram. It is interesting to note that *mandovara* part of this temple at Para is exactly similar to the lower half of the temple II and III at Boram whereas the *shikhara* part is exactly similar to the tower of the Temple I at Boram. Here the heart-shaped *gavaksha* can be seen flanked by a series of miniature *latina shikharas* placed one above the other used on *pratiratha* and *karnaratha*. The *bhumi amalakas* are absent like Boram temples but *amalakas* of the *latina shikharas* can be seen at the corners providing a rounded profile to the tower.

Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, Bankura, late 11th century

The *Deul* type reaches its zenith in the finest brick temple of the *latina* mode in this part of the country at Bahulara in Bankura district. The shrine of Siddhesvara temple is of *triratha* plan with central projection being much bolder than the other. There are many more offsets in the plan on the both sides of the central projection continued from top to bottom of the temple anticipating a *saptaratha* plan (drg.5.4). In front the shrine is approached through a vestibule in the thickness of the wall which is boldly projected on this face. The entrance is terminated by corbelled stages but on the outer face shows a restored front (fig.5.27).

The *mandovara* of the temple is divided into five parts like the tenth century temples seen at Bhubaneswar calling it *panchanga mandovara*, a general feature of the *Deul* type shrines (fig.5.28, 29). Here in the middle part of the *jangha* three fine mouldings in brick run all

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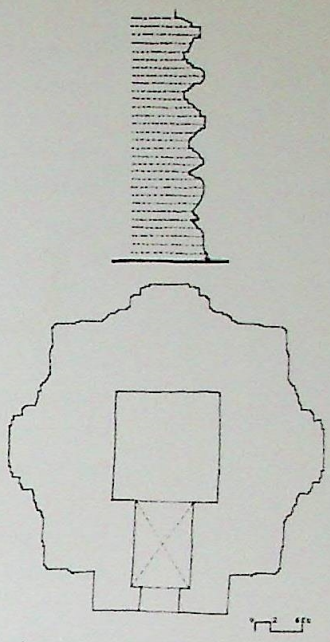
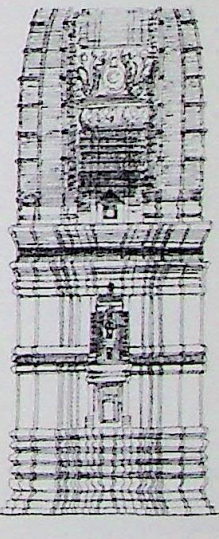
Fig. 5.27: Siddhesvara temple, Restored front face, Bahulara, Bankura, late 11th century.



Drg. 5.4: Ground Plan and Vedibandha detail, Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, Bankura, late 11th century.

around the body of the sanctum. The middle of the three mouldings has fluted indentations like *amalaka* all along its length. These mouldings called *bandhana*, however discontinue over the central projections on the *jangha* and on the front face of the temple. The *vedibandha* rests on a two tier *pishta* which itself is placed on a variegated *upana*. The *vedibandha*, which rises up to six feet eight inches above *pishta*, consists of six tiers which have undergone some restoration. The lower two are *khura-kumbha* and *kalasha* with a flattened top and the others resemble *kapotapali* mouldings (fig. 5.32).

The so-called miniature *rekha* or *latina shikhara*[11] on the central projections of the *jangha* is the most interesting feature of this temple (fig. 5.29, drg.5.4, 5.5). It starts at the top of the *vedibandha* and reach up to the *varandika* moulding. The lower part of the *jangha* has an oblong niche with an image carved in brick and the upper part has a miniature *latina shikhara*. This miniature *shikhara* has a heart shaped *gavaksha* crowned by a *kirtimukha* on its body and the whole aedicule is complete with crowning *amalaka*, *varandika* and the lower part having another niche. If we closely observe, this is superimposed on a *valabhi*-roofed tower, which is crowned by a larger but flat *amalaka* (drg.5.6). The whole composition on the central projection of the *jangha* is the general characteristic of the *Deul* type and here the aedicules show *varandika* and *vedibandha* also. Starting with the *deul* at Sonatapal, developing on the Boram site this concept is very clearly displayed on the Siddheshvara temple at Bahulara. As observed earlier in the chapter three this feature was first seen in the Pala territory in Magadha on the Pala remains and earlier in the temples of Jageshwar in northern hills of India. This reflects a common tradition of aedicular composition of the *latina* shrines in the *nagara* language of temple architecture.



Drg. 5.5: Side Elevation of the Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, Bankura, late 11th century.

The *jangha* of this temple is capped by an elegant *varandika* moulding running on all four sides of the temple, but unlike *bandhana* mouldings, all three tiers of the lower set of the *varandika* mouldings are not same. The top tier here projects out boldly to form an eave

[11] Saraswati, 1976, p. 60

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like projection, over which a broad recess forms the *kantha* of the temple. The *kantha* recess is capped by another set of three similarly projecting mouldings forming the base of the *shikhara*. The treatment of the *kantha* recess is done by a row of miniature *shikharas* seen in Bengal temple architecture for the first time. These *shikharas* appear like a *latina shikhara* but do not have *latas* and are composed of horizontal tiers only.

The tower has a chaste and refined contour with a very small curvature from the start. The upper part of the tower is missing but must have been crowned by a *mastaka* similar to the *latina* mode temples. The temple *shikhara* shows another development with its corners and edges of the projecting facets being rounded off as seen in Orissan temples at Bhubaneswar in the eleventh century. At the *karnarathas* there appear the *bhumi amalakas* which are circular and of very small thickness. These are actually crowning *amalakas* of the *latina* shrines placed one over other on the *karnarathas* and the tower survives up to the height of six such miniature *latina* shrines. The entire surface of the *shikhara* is covered with intricate traceries of *gavaksha* patterns and scrolls but there are recesses seen between *rathas* and *pratirathas* as observed in the Boram temples.

The individuality of this temple is also observed in the treatment of the central *lata*. The lower part of the *madhyalata* has five rows of miniature *latina* shrines, as seen on the *kantha* recess, in the full width of the projection. This group is capped by a very bold *gavaksha* pattern decorated with many scrolls. Considering this *gavaksha* and its crowning member as top of a *latina* shrine, a full height *latina* aedicule starting from the ground can be observed (drg.5.2 & 5.5), but in the lack of any pronounced volume, it lacks the clarity of the full *latina* aedicule as seen on the *Sekhari* shrines of the *nagara* tradition.

In the centre of the rows of miniature *latina shikhara* used on the *shikhara* a small niche appears at the top of the *varandika* capped by receding tiers in pyramidal shape and crowned by *amalaka*. This is a *phamsana* aedicule used for the first time in Bengal architecture for the decoration of a *latina shikhara* (fig.5.28). The use of so many miniature *shikharas* seems to be a new interpretation of the concept of multiplication as used on the body of the *shikhara* of the *bhumija* mode temples in the *nagara* tradition.

Fig. 5.30: Recessed *Kantha* between *Varandika* mouldings, Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, late 11th century.

Fig. 5.31 *Shikhara* adorned with *gavakshas* and *latina* aedicules, Siddhesvara temple, late 11th century.

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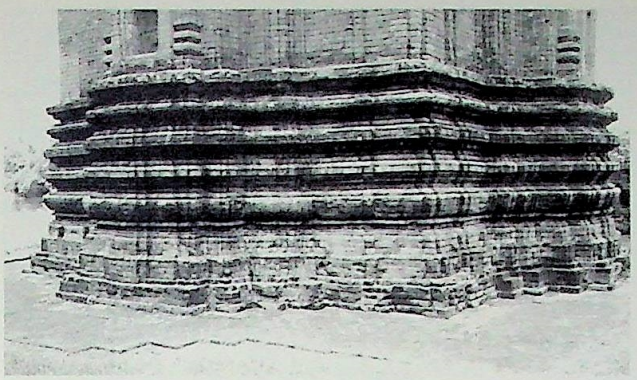

Fig. 5.32: Detail of the *vedibandha, pishta* and *upana*, Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara, late 11th century.

The temple seems to have been covered by very fine stuccowork on the cut brick surfaces. The remains of the stuccowork shows below the *varandika* cornice the popular band of pearl strings attached to lion face or *kirtimukha* and at intervals held by celestial figures. On other plain surfaces of the Bahulara temple the remains of stuccowork shows a very fine workmanship. In 1872, J. D. Beglar has seen the remains of subsidiary shrines on four corners of this temple enclosure suggesting this to be of the *panchaytana* type.[12] This is quite possible with a few more *panchayatana* shrines found in the vicinity such as at Budhpur in Purulia and Ambikanagar in Bankura districts. As mentioned by Saraswati,[13] scholars such as Coomaraswamy, Dikshit have suggested a date of the eleventh century for this temple. By treatment of the *shikhara* the temple seems to be a successor of the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar and on the basis of the number of tiers in the *vedibandha*, the use of *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules and the features on the *shikhara* the temple may be dated from the late eleventh century.

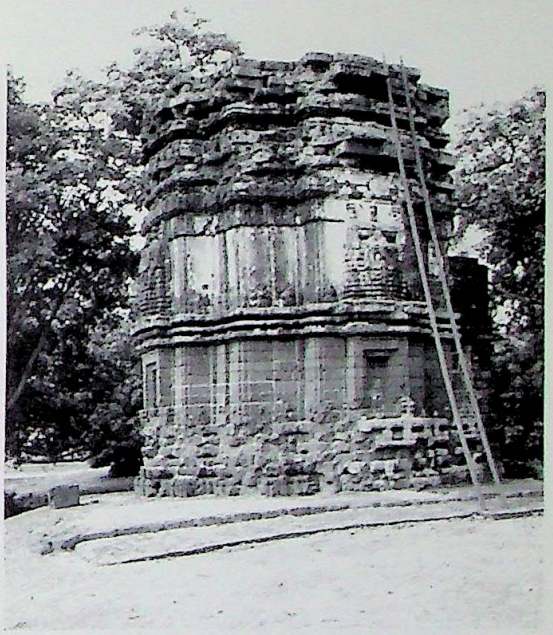

Fig. 5.33: *Shikhara* missing and *vedibandha* deteriorated, Sallesvara Temple, Dihar, Bankura, 12th century.

With the Siddhesvara temple the *Deul* type of the *latina* mode temples built in brick attains its mature stage and the temples built after it assimilated influences from the stone temples, from the temples of the *phamsana* mode along with the Orissan influences. The most notable change was noticed in the treatment of the *shikhara* of *latina* shrines with horizontal tiers only.

Sallesvara and Sarvesvara Temples, Dihar, Bankura, 12th century

Not very far from Bahulara on a mound at Dihar near Bishnupur there are remains of two stone temples standing close to each other facing west. These are built of conglomerate laterite stone called kankar and were originally covered by the stucco plaster which survives in parts. They seem to be direct successors of the Bahulara temple and show more similarities with early brick temples of Bengal. Presently both the temples are in sad state of repair and have lost their *shikharas*.

The temple called Sallesvara is *pancharatha* on plan with central projection much bolder than the others. In front the shrine is approached through a vestibule in the thickness of the

[12] Beglar and Cunningham, 1878, p. 202.
[13] Saraswati, 1976, p. 61

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Fig. 5.34: Detail of valabhi aedicule on mandovara, Sallesvara Temple, Dihar, Bankura, 12th century.

Fig. 5.35: Barrel vaulted roof of the *valabhi* aedicule, Sallesvara Temple, Dihar, Bankura, 12th century.

Fig. 5.36: *Nayikas* above *vedibandha* and the pearl string motif, Sallesvara Temple, Dihar, Bankura.

wall which is boldly projecting on this face. The entrance is terminated by corbelled stages but on the outer face shows a restored front.

The *mandovara* of the temple is divided into five parts like the temple at Bahulara but the size of the temple is much smaller here (fig. 5.33). In the middle part of the *jangha* three fine mouldings run all around the body of the sanctum. These mouldings called *bandhana*, however discontinue on the front face of the temple, but unlike the Bahulara temple run over the central projections on the *jangha* dividing the projecting aedicule. The upper moulding is slightly more projected than the bottom two. The *vedibandha* rests on an *upana* and consists of four tiers which are badly mutilated, the bottom two are *khura-kumbha* and *kalasha* with a flattened top. The upper two are in the shape of a *kapotapali* and *vedi* with all four tiers linked together at intervals by vertical bands as found first on the temples of the Bhaumakara period (8th – late 9th century) in Bhubaneswar.

The decoration on the *jangha* is made special by placing *nayikas* in dancing postures just above the *vedibandha* carved beautifully in stone on each *rathaka* projections. These *nayikas* are repeated on top of the *bandhana* mouldings in the similar way making the whole *jangha* animated. It is the first use of figurative sculptures on the temples of Bengal. On this temple also we see a miniature temple aedicule on the central projections of the *mandovara*. It starts with the *vedibandha* and reaches up to the *varandika* mouldings. The lower part of the *jangha* has an oblong empty niche and the upper part has a miniature *shikhara*. This miniature *shikhara* has a heart-shaped *gavaksha* crowned by a *kirtimukha* on its body (fig. 5.34, 5.36). If we closely observe, this rectangular *shikhara* is a *valabhi* roofed tower, which is crowned by a central vase. The composition on the central projection of the *jangha* can be said to be a *valabhi* aedicule only and unlike the Bahulara temple superimposition of the *latina* aedicule does not happen here (fig.5.6). It seems the experimentation of placing miniature temple aedicules

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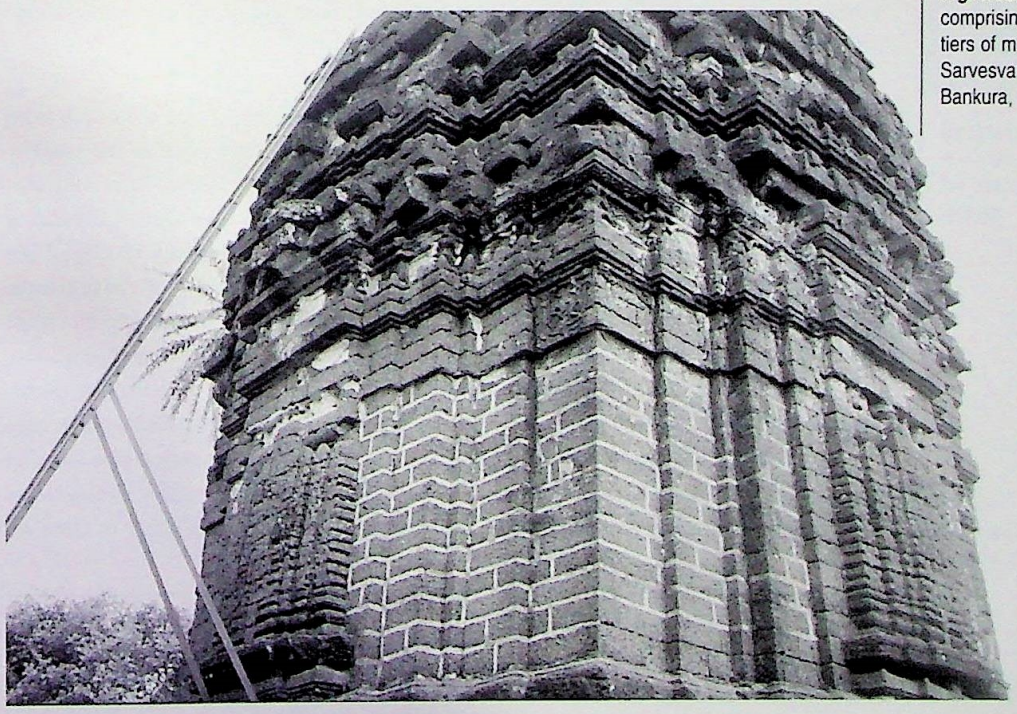
started at the site of Telkupi went on in Bengal architecture. This temple also shows the use of popular band depicting hanging pearl strings coming out of the lion-face carved in stuccowork in a frieze just below the *varandika* moulding which has only one tier in this temple.

On top of the *varandika* moulding a recessed *kantha* can be observed above which the tower of the temple starts (fig. 5.35). The *kantha* is not relieved by rows of pilasters or miniature *shikharas* as seen in the earlier temples but here we see the use of atlantes in the pose of supporting the tower of the temple seen at a later date in the Temple I and II at Barakar. The *shikhara* above has the remains of damaged tiers and it seems the tower was composed of the rows of *kapotapali* shaped mouldings as seen later on the *shikharas* of the stone temples at Para and Barakar. There are no miniature *shikharas* or *bhumi amalakas* seen on the remaining part of the tower of the temple.

Fig. 5.37: Located a few meters apart from Sallesvara temple, Sarvesvara Temple, Dihar, Bankura, 12th century

The temple called Sarvesvara located just a few meters apart from the Sallesvara, is also *pancharatha* on plan and almost similar to the Sallesvara temple described above. The temple, however, shows following individualities in the decoration of the *jangha*. Here the *mandovara* of the temple is divided into five parts and in the middle part of the *jangha* only one fine moulding runs all around the body of the sanctum dividing the *jangha* in two unequal parts. This moulding called *bandhana*, however discontinues on the front face of the temple and unlike the Sallesvara temple discontinues over the central projections on the *jangha* also. The *vedibandha* rests on a platform in which the lower tiers are buried but these are same as Sallesvara temple with all four tiers linked together at intervals by vertical strips (fig. 5.37).

Fig. 5.38: *Shikhara* comprising of Horizontal tiers of mouldings, Sarvesvara Temple, Bankura, 12th century.



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The decoration on the *jangha* is made special here also by placing *nayikas* in dancing postures just above the *vedibandha* on each *rathaka* projections. These *nayikas* are not repeated on the top of the *bandhana* mouldings as in Sallesvara temple. The remaining details on the Sarvesvara temple are exactly similar to the Sallesvara temple including the mouldings on the surviving part of the tower of the temple (fig. 5.38).

These two temples present an important stage in the development of the *latina* temples in Bengal as they clearly show the influence of the Bahulara temple but also have features inspired by the stone temples at Telkupi, Pakbira and Ambikanagar. Based on the 1335 CE date of the Shanresvar temple, also at Dihar, McCutchion[14] thinks these temples belonged to the early fourteenth century. Datta[15] has dated them to the eleventh century on the basis of their similarity with the Bahulara and Ambikanagar temples. By that account, a twelfth century date seems appropriate, as suggested by Biswas and Haque[16].

Fig. 5.39: The tall profile of the *shikhara*, Ichhai Ghoser Deul, Gaurangpur, Burdwan, early 14th century

Ichhai Ghoser *Deul*, Gaurangpur, Burdwan, early 14th century

On the south bank of the Ajay river in the north part of Burdwan district a tall *deul* survives on a mound in the midst of dense forests earlier known as Gopbhum. The Ichhai Ghoser *Deul*, as this Shiva temple is called, is a major landmark in the area, standing eighty feet high and can be seen from Jaydev-Kenduli across the river. Architecturally the *deul* is a departure from the '*Deul* type' mentioned above but included here to register the later influences on the brick-built shrines of Bengal. The tower shows signs of restoration on the top and on the base portion and also at the entrance level where there is no vestibule (fig. 5.39). A re-constructed semi-circular arch forms the entrance to the sanctum, which has a corbelled roof and a floor below the ground level housing a large *shivalinga* of black basalt. The sanctum is square from inside and *pancharatha* on plan with shallow exterior projections. The lower portion does not show any *vedibandha* mouldings but shows a projected part, which is plainly restored. Three intermediate *bandhana* mouldings run all around the sanctum walls dividing the *jangha* in four parts. There are no decorations on the *bhadra* and *rathaka* projections, which are capped by the lower *varandika* moulding. A plain *kantha* recess is capped by a broad stepped moulding of the *varandika* above which the straight tower starts (fig. 5.40).

Fig. 5.40: Top of the *latina* aedicule, Ichhai Ghoser Deul, Gaurangpur, Burdwan, early 14th century

The five divisions on the *latina shikhara* are marked by deep vertical recesses which were not present on the walls of *jangha*, however these divisions correspond to the shallow projections on the wall. The central *latas* on all four sides have miniature *latina* aedicules superimposed on them (fig.5.41, 5.42). The design of these miniature *latina* aedicules is very curious as they are tall and straight and may represent the original profile of the temple tower. It consists of two parts divided by a horizontal moulding which have figures of *makara mukha* at its ends. Both parts have ornate pilastered niche housing an image carved in bricks and capped by multi-foliated arch. On the front side we find the *kirtimukha*, over which is a vase, placed on a small lotus bracket which appears like a spherical *amalaka*. The representation of the *kirtimukha* is done in different poses on each face, which may have something to do with the beliefs of the Santhalis[17] inhabiting the region who worship deities with such faces. The similar crouching pose of a human figure with a *kirtimukha* is also seen on some of the Orissan temples. The niches in front contain an image of Ganesha

[14] McCutchion, 1972, p.5.
[15] Datta, B.K. *Bengal Temples*. New Delhi, 1975, p. 26
[16] Biswas and Haque, 1995. Appendix 4, p.65.
[17] The local tribal people inhabiting the region on the north of Burdwan and Birbhum districts of West Bengal in the district of Santhal Pargana named after its inhabitants.

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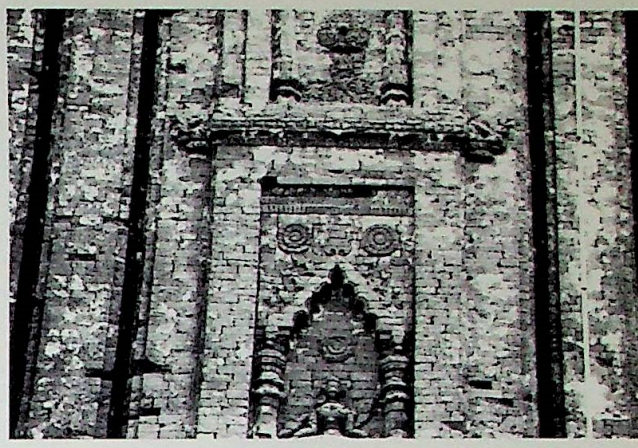
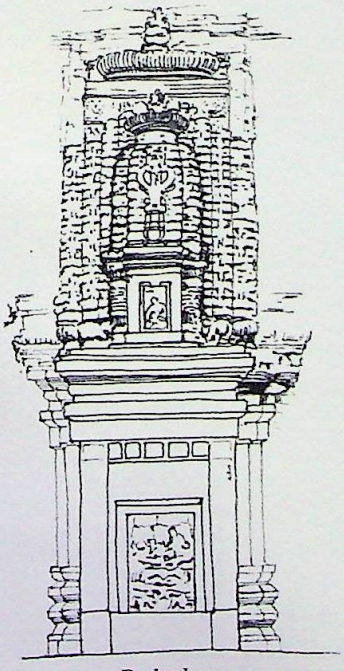


Fig. 5.41: Detail of the *mandovara*, Ichhai Ghoser Deul, Burdwan, early 14th century

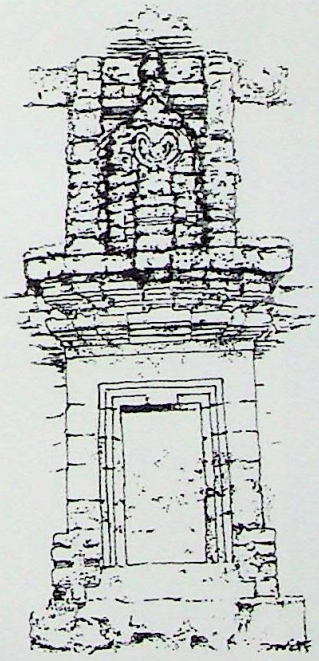
Fig. 5.42: *Lata* and *Rathas* on the *shikhara* separated by deep recesses, Ichhai Ghoser Deul, Burdwan, early 14th century.

and in other Durga, while those at the sides contain only a lotus rosette in the upper panels and an image in the lower ones. The whole tower ends at the upper portion abruptly and is capped by a domical top after restoration.

Chakrabarty[18] writes that a tenth / eleventh century date should be acceptable for the temple but he has not examined the temple himself and quoted Banerjee[19] who has not suggested any date. The composition of the *latina* aedicules shown on the body of the temple *shikhara* is a development of what was seen on earlier temples. It has all the elements seen on Boram temples- the niche with images, pilasters, hepta-foil arch and a stylised *kirtimukha*. The niches of this *deul* are flanked by pilasters which are modeled on the basis of the Pala pillars and pilasters but seen in stone. These are capped by multi foiled arches which are also seen on the earliest of the mosques built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Bengal in combination with these pilasters discussed in chapter seven. On this basis it



Bahulara



Dihar

Drg. 5.6: *Latina* and *Valabhi* Aedicules used in *Deul* type temples.

[18] Chakrabarty, 1993, p. 165.
[19] Banerjee, R. D., *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, Delhi. 1933. pp. 149-150.

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seems the date suggested by Chakrabarty is too early and the temple must have been built in the early fourteenth century after Bahulara, Boram and Para temples and after some developments in the Islamic capitals of Gaur and Pandua.

The above description about the eleven temples built of brick presents the *deul* type of temples of the *latina* mode with their ever-evolving characteristics. Their general characteristics listed in the beginning of this chapter are the result of the development process with various influences. As seen in the temples at Dihar, the later temples of stone were adapting the characteristics of the brick temples. In the later stone-built *latina* temples at Barakar and Pandra, discussed in chapter four, we see a fusion of the three types of the *latina* mode built in Bengal to begin a new journey of the late mediaeval temples with some traits of continuity.

The majority of the temples described in chapters four and five are Siva temples and the *Sivalingas* placed in situ at a level lower than the floor outside suggest their antiquity and Saivite affiliations. Many sculptures of Jaina affiliations were recovered from the sites of Satdeuliya, Bahulara, Boram and Pakbira but nothing conclusive can be said about the temples which housed them.[20] It should also be noted that from the same sites good number of Saivite sculptures[21] are also recovered perhaps adding to the confusion.

The story of the early temple architecture in Bengal remains incomplete without the discussion about the surviving temples of the *phamsana* and *valabhi* mode, which has so profoundly influenced the *latina* mode temples of the region. It was observed on the Telkupi site in Purulia district that with large number of the Telkupi type *latina* temples, there were three *phamsana* structures also influencing the *latina* types built in the region. Since the builders in Bengal were familiar with the *phamsana* mode it is quite possible that the *mandapa* remains seen with the Boram Siva temple, and with a few other *latina* temples were covered by a *phamsana* roof. The subtle presence of the *valabhi* mode in Bengal temple architecture as discussed above is a special phenomenon and total lack of the extant examples is baffling. However, there is one *valabhi* temple dedicated to Sarvamangala Devi in Garhbeta, Midnapore signifying the use of the mode for the *Shakti* shrines. Together with the fragments of the temple architecture housed in the various museums of the world, the *phamsana* and *valabhi* mode temples are discussed in the next chapter.¶

[20] Banerjee, Priyatosh, 1974, 'East India' (chapter 15) in: *Jain Art and Architecture* (ed. A. Ghosh), Delhi, pp. 152-67, mentions the Deuliya temple to be of Jaina affiliation.

[21] Chakrabati, 1993, pp. 134-135.

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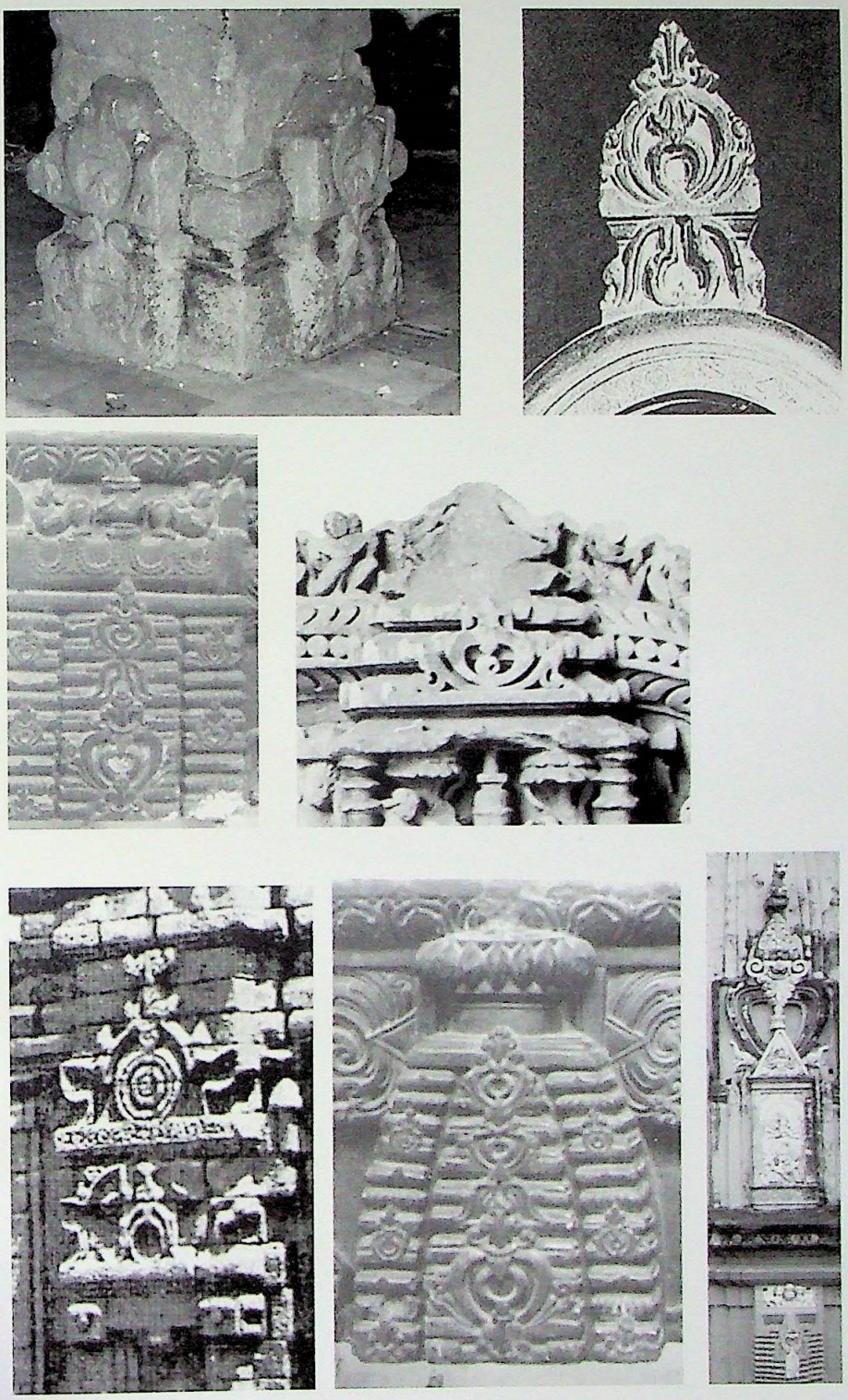

Fig. 5.43: Detail of the Heart-shaped *gavaksha* used in Eastern Indian architecture

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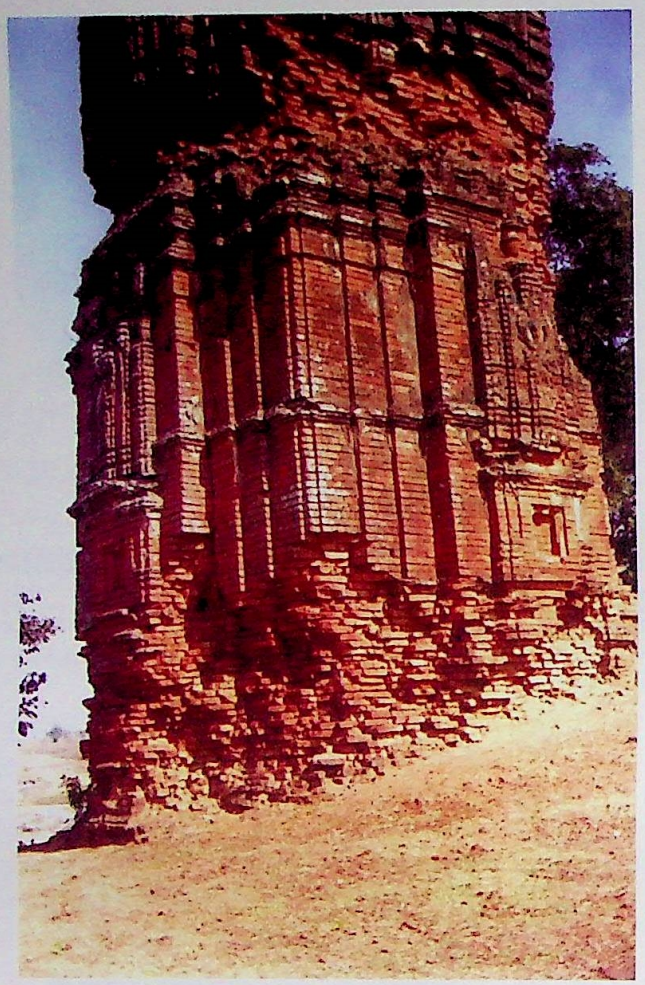

Valabhi and latina aedicule on Mandovara, Temple I, Boram

Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara

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Sallesvara Temple, Dihar, Bankura

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Siddhesvara temple, Bahulara

Ichhai Ghoser Deul, Burdwan

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Temple Architecture of Eastern India

Temples of the *Phamsana* and *Valabhi* Mode and other Architectural Fragments

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As discussed in Chapter three, the *phamsana* mode of the *nagara* language of temple architecture was well known in Bengal but the extant structures do not come from that geographical region from where the architectural fragments and sculptures showing the *phamsana* mode were found. In fact any extant or known structures from our study period (800-1600 CE) of such mode are limited to Purulia, Bankura and Midnapore districts of the state of West Bengal whereas the fragments come mainly from north Bengal and north Bihar (map 4). To explain the general features of the *phamsana* mode of the *nagara* temples, a labeled drawing of one typical *phamsana* shrine of Bengal is presented with its various parts in chapter three (See drg. 3.5).

In the early developments of this mode of temple building, it is used for the sanctum whereas the mode continued to be used in the sixteenth and seventeenth century as *mandapa* of the large *latina* temples. During our study period (800-1600 CE), two temples of almost identical characteristics are hard to find, hence all the known examples are described below to develop an understanding of the building of the *phamsana* mode in Bengal. Saraswati[1] describes two such ancient temples in Bankura district at Atbaichandi and Hakanda Maynapur.

Fig.6.1: Atbaichandi temple, Taldingra, Bankura, *Phamsana* mode, 9th Century.

Atbaichandi temple, Taldingra, Bankura, 9th Century

Saraswati writes about the Atbaichandi temple "It consists of a *tri-ratha* shrine supported on a platform. The projection in front accommodates the doorway, while those on the other three niches for sculptures that are missing. Axially the cube is divided into three vertical sections, the lowest is the plinth showing three ornate mouldings. The cube terminates in a recessed moulding over which rises the pyramidal superstructure. The top elements have tumbled down. From the design of the mouldings of the plinth and general architectonic shape the shrine may be assigned to a comparatively early date, possibly not later than the ninth century." It is probably the similarity of the *vedibandha* mouldings with those of the Siddhesvara temple at Barakar which has led Saraswati to suggest a date not later than the ninth century. The lower tier of the tower is steep as seen on other early examples and the temple built of stone masonry must have been plastered like the Ekteswara shrine. The number of the receding tiers of the *phamsana* roof and the character of the crowning element could not be ascertained from the old photograph (fig. 6.1). The present restored and cement plastered form of the temple is totally changed from what was observed by Saraswati and is presently called the Basuli temple.

Ektesvara temple, Ektesvara, Bankura, 10th century

While mentioning the Nandi Pavilion within the premises of the Ektesvara temple near Bankura, Saraswati did not mention the two-tiered *phamsana* shrine of the Ektesvara. This temple has also undergone many repairs as mentioned in Bankura District Gazetteer[2], but what remains of significance is the *vedibandha*, which is the boldest of all seen in whole Bengal. It is in four tiers composed of *khura-kumbha*, *kalasha*, *kapotapali* and an inverted *kapotapali* forming *vedi* for the *jangha* part above (fig.6.4). On the basis of these the temple may be dated slightly later than the Atbaichandi temple and the Siddhesvara temple of the *latina* mode at Barakar. Hence, the date of the tenth century seems appropriate for this temple.

[1] Saraswati, Sarasi K. *Architecture of Bengal.* Calcutta: G. Bhardwaj 1976, pp. 69-70

[2] O'Malley, L. S. S. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Bankura*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1908, Reprint January, 1995, p.195.

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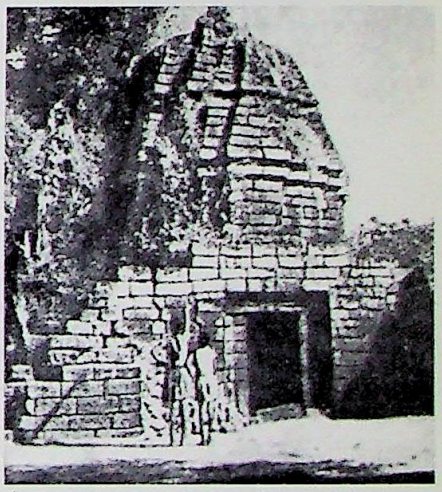
The Ektesvara temple is square in plan with bold *bhadra* projections (drg.6.1). These projections may be of later date, as the mouldings do not continue along them. Here, the significant part is the tiered roofing above the openings or niches formed on these projections (fig.6.2). The four-tiered roofing above is similar to the side porches of the *mandapas* seen in Orissan architecture[3] and might have been built anticipating a *phamsana* aedicule. At karna sides of these *bhadra* projections, we see five-tiered tower of a miniature shrine on the wall of the temple. These are the *phamsana* aedicules[4] starting from the ground level and seem to rightly follow the Bengal tradition of keeping the *shikhara* in tall proportions (fig.6.2 and 6.3). In fact in its tall proportions these miniature towers look like the *latina* shrines but the absence of any *lata* and the pyramidal profile of the tower put them in the mode of the *phamsana* aedicules.

The small Ektesvara shrine itself is covered by a two-tiered low pyramidal roof crowned by a *ghanta* and a large *amalaka shila*. Below the tower a bold continuous moulding forms a *varandika* which projects like an eave. Hence, within the Ektesvara shrine we see three types of the *phamsana* representation - one on the side porches, another on the miniature aedicules and last on the top of the shrine. All these types of the *phamsana* mode are used in Bengal temples of the later period.

Hakanda Siva temple, Maynapur, Bankura, 10th century

Hakanda Siva temple at Maynapur in Bankura district is also mentioned by Saraswati[5] as belonging to our study period. The sanctum of the temple is built in the *phamsana* mode and the pyramidal roof consists of three steep tiers of plain nature. At the top of the sanctum cube a recessed moulding forms a *varandika*. The tower rises up to a height of 30 feet and the square plan of the temple has a side of 16 feet. The temple initially had a *mandapa* which no longer exists (fig.6.5).



Clockwise

Fig.6.2: Ektesvara temple, Ektesvara, Bankura, *Phamsana* mode, 10th Century.

Fig. 6.3: Detail on the rear wall, *Phamsana* aedicule Ektesvara temple, 10th Century.

Fig. 6.4: Detail of the *vedibandha* moulding, Ektesvara temple, 10th Century.

Fig. 6.5: Hakanda Siva temple, Maynapur, Bankura, *Phamsana* mode, 10th Century

[3] In fully developed *phamsana* mandapas such as of the Lingaraja temple or Brhmeshvara temple at Bhubaneswar.

[4] For a discussion about the aedicules and aedicular components of a *nagara* shrine see chapter three.

[5] Saraswati, 1976, p.70.

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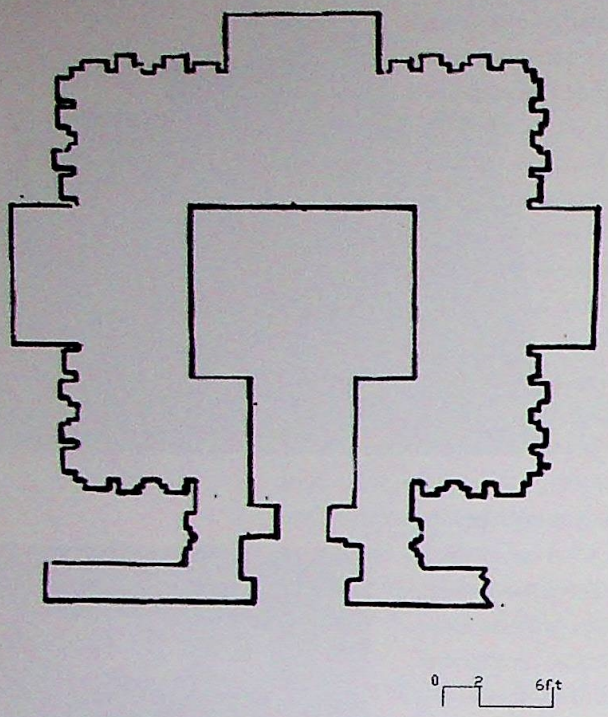

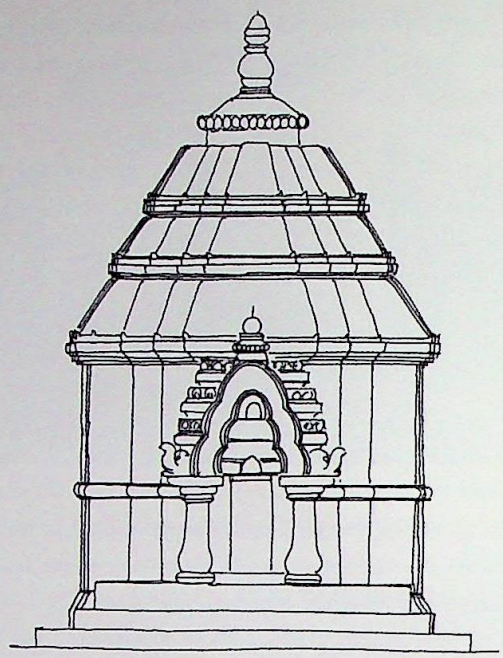

Drg. 6.1: Plan at the *Vedibandha* level, Ektesvara temple, Ektesvara, Bankura.

Drg. 6.2: Front Elevation of the Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 11th Century.

The character of the steep tiers of the *phamsana* roof and similarity with Atbaichandi shrine in terms of stone construction and the remains of the deteriorated *vedibandha*, suggest this temple to be of the tenth century date.

Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, 11th century

There are a few extant structures in Midnapore district, which present the proper picture of the presence of the *phamsana* mode of temple building in Bengal. A shrine named as Kangareshwara in Garhbeta town seems to be the earliest. The presence of many black basalt sculptural remains on the site and the design of the temple doorway may suggest that this temple belongs to the eleventh century.[6]

The single cell shrine is sixteen feet square, *saptaratha* in plan with very shallow *rathaka* projections (fig.6.6, 6.7). It rises from a platform and only one *khura-kumbha* moulding forms the base of the jangha (fig.6.8). A laterite stone moulding called *bandhana* runs all around the sanctum dividing the walls into two vertical parts. The front of the temple presents an archaic but crude appearance (fig.6.9). Behind the five foliated arch, supported on the round columns, is the four-tiered *phamsana* representation similar to those seen on the architectural fragments and the sculptures of the Pala period described earlier in the chapter three[7]. The entrance arch is crowned by an *amalaka* and a spherical *kalasha*. The lintel of the entrance doorway is of particular interest as the portion within the five-foiled arch is also tiered. In the center of the lintel another miniature shrine of the *phamsana* mode is represented with a multifoliated arch.

The shallow *rathaka* projections of the cube of the sanctum are carried up to the tiered top. The temple has three steep tiers with shallow intermediate grooves similar to the tiers of the Hakanda Siva temple. The tower starts above a small stepped stone moulding forming a

[6] O'Malley, L. S. S. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Midnapore*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1911, Reprint January, 1995, p.218

[7] The *phamsana* example from Nalanda shown in fig. 3.26 is very close to what is represented on the Kangareshwara temple.

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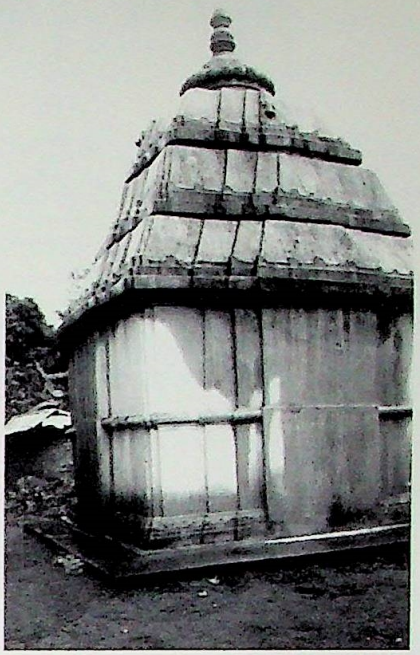

Clockwise
Fig.6.6: Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 11th Century.

Fig. 6.7: Rear wall with shallow *rathaka* projections, Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, 11th Century.

Fig. 6.8: Front opening of the temple on a platform, Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, 11th Century.

Fig. 6.9: *Phamsana* aedicule used as the entrance vestibule, Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, 11th Century.

varandika. The tiered tower is crowned by a *kalasha* above a *ghanta* element in the shape of a large bell in these temples. *Amalaka shila*, generally present in the *mastaka* element of the shrines of the *phamsana* mode above the *ghanta* element is absent in this temple (drg.6.2). The square space inside the sanctum shows the corbelled roof plastered from inside also. Like the Ektesvara temple, on Kangareshwara temple also we see three different representations of the *phamsana* mode of the *nagara* language of the temple architecture. The *nagara* language may be observed in the near vicinity of the Kangareshwara temple, present in the Sarvamangala temple. This *Shakti* shrine is the only surviving example in the whole of Bengal of the *valabhi* mode sanctum which uses the *phamsana* mode for a large *mandapa*. It shows the popularity of various modes of the *nagara* language of the temple architecture within this part of Bengal. It is interesting to note that the first *chala* temples[8] of Bengal

[8] Singhavahini temple of Ghatal, Midnapore with *charchala* roof was built in 1490CE discussed in the chapter eight.

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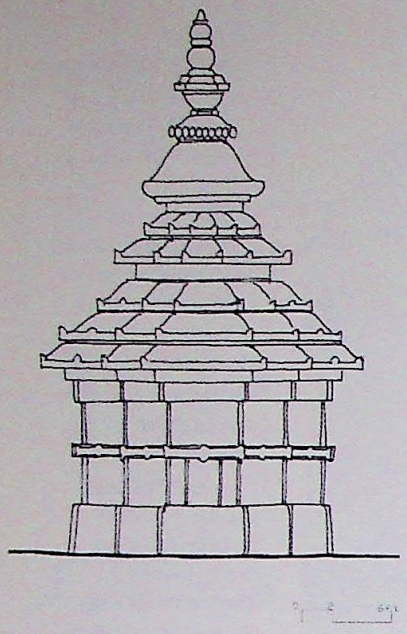

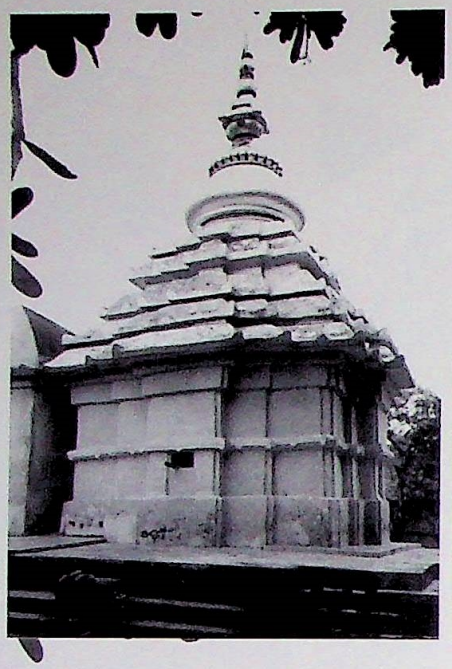

Drg. 6.3: Side Elevation of the Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 12th Century.

Clockwise
Fig. 6.10: Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 12th Century.

Fig. 6.11: Rear wall with empty niche on projecting *bhadra*, Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, 12th Century.

Fig. 6.12: Oblong *mandapa* with *charchala* roof, Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, 12th Century.

with curved sloping roof started appearing in the Midnapore district probably modeled after the frequently used *phamsana* mode in the district.

Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, Midnapore, 12th century

Syamalesvara temple at Dantan village also in Midnapore district can be said to be the most elegant *phamsana* structure in the whole of Bengal. The village of Dantan is of hoary antiquity and is dotted with many ancient water bodies, one of them named after Sasanka, the seventh century king of Gauda.[9] The site of the Syamalesvara Siva temple has many sculptural remains of the Pala-Sena period.[10] One elegantly carved *shardula* of black basalt forms the waterspout from the sanctum where a Shiva's phallic symbol *Sivalinga* is placed at a level lower than the *mandapa* (fig.6.14). Outside the temple a Nandi image of black

[9] O'Malley, Midnapore, 1911, p. 216

[10] The characteristic features on the sculptural remains and their comparison with the remains of the Pala-Sena period kept in the Indian Museum, Kolkata suggests the site to be active since early Pala period.

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basalt faces the temple, which is fashioned in the typical Pala idiom (fig.6.15). Another fragment is part of a square waterspout, which has, on its sides impressive mouldings and a *gavaksha* pattern showing its antiquity.

The sanctum part of the temple is externally fourteen feet wide, square with *triratha* plan. The very bold *bhadra* projection in the center accommodates a niche on three sides and the entrance vestibule on the fourth side (fig. 6.10, 6.11). The temple is placed on a four feet high platform probably added later. The *vedibandha* does not show any mouldings which is surprising considering the probable age of the structure. It may be possible that due to the rising dampness (which may still be seen) mouldings became dilapidated and the later restoration works made the *vedibandha* plain plastered. One bold *bandhana* moulding running all across divides the *jangha* of the temple into two parts. All three niches on the *bhadra* projections are empty.

The pyramidal tower sits on a two-tier plain *varandika* moulding on top of the wall. The elegant roof is formed of the two groups of receding tiers called *pidhas* in Bengal and Orissa. Three tiers are in one group and two tiers form the top group separated by a wide groove. These tiers really look like the tiers of the eaves mouldings and form a very balanced composition to be topped by an impressive *mastaka* (drg.6.3). The stone eave mouldings have their edges carved in the shape of the ends of bamboo joists reminding their origin from thatch and bamboo huts. The *rathaka* projections of the sanctum are carried up to the top with each turn meticulously formed in the stone mouldings.

The temple is also significant for the design of its *mandapa* (fig.6.12). It is an oblong, low, corbelled structure with plain plastered and curved sloping roof. The four sloping sides forming the *charchala* roof with straight cornices covering the structure are constructed by elegant corbelling in the ceiling (fig.6.13). It is generally believed that *charchala* structures in Bengal always used vaulting techniques and were built only after the arrival of Muslims. Here the corbelled structure of this *mandapa* proves a point that *charchala* and *atchala*[11] structures with four and eight sloping sides can be easily built using corbelling and were known as forms since the beginning of the timber architecture.

The ceiling of the sanctum is also formed using similar corbelling, as is the practice in all the *phamsana* shrines. A black basalt doorway separates the corbelled *mandapa* and the sanctum. The lintel has an inscription also which as per the priest of the temple supposedly dates this temple to the ninth century. The 12th century date for this temple considering the many late Pala-Sena remains on the site seems more plausible. Probably considering the *charchala mandapa*, McCutchion[12] has placed the temple from the late mediaeval period (1550-1850 CE), which seems incorrect due to the presence of corbelling in both structures and other antiquities.

Sarvamangala temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, 13th century

The *phamsana* mode continues to be used for temples at Kesiari in Midnapore where the mode is used for a *jagmohan* and *mandapa* also at Kesiari. There are interesting variations in the elements of the *mastaka* to differentiate between the *garbhagriha* and the *mandapa*.

The Sarvamangala temple at Kesiari is a very popular Shakti shrine.[13] It has three-square

[11] Discussed in detail in chapter eight.
[12] McCutchion, David J.*Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal- Origins and Classifications*. The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972, p. 25.

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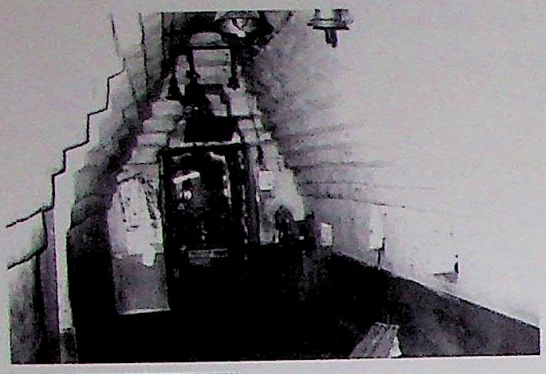

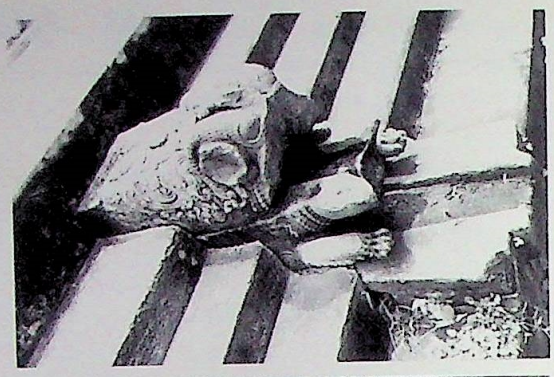

Clockwise

Fig. 6.13: Corbelled ceiling of the *charchala mandapa*, Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, 12th Century.

Fig. 6.14: Black basalt water spout attached to the sanctum, Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, 12th Century.

Fig. 6.15: Black basalt Nandi bull facing the shrine, Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, 12th Century.

Fig. 6.16: Sarvamangala temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 13th Century.

chambers in one line all roofed by tiered pyramidal tower. The sanctum and the *jagmohan* belong to the thirteenth century whereas the *mandapa* is a recent addition (fig.6.16). The walls of the *garbhagriha* and *jagmohan* are plain plastered on laterite stone masonry without any niches. Both structures are square in plan with shallow *rathaka* projections forming *pancharatha* plan (fig.6.17).

Unlike the Syamalesvara temple the eave mouldings of the tiered tower are in one group of five tiers with equal recesses. The design of the eave mouldings is similar to those of the Syamalesvara temple with their edges carved to represent the ends of the bamboo joists. The *rathaka* projections of the *sanctum* and *jagmohan* walls are carried up to the tiered tops. The difference in both early structures of the *phamsana* mode is created in the difference of the crowning feature. The ghanta crowning the *sanctum* has taller multi-tiered *kalasha* and a flat *amalaka* forming an elegant *mastaka*. On the four corners of skandha lions in sitting posture are placed guarding the deity (fig.6.17). The *mastaka* of the *jagmohan* comprises a taller *griva, ghanta* and *kalasha* with *amalaka* being absent (fig.6.18). Both the structures have corbelled ceiling plastered from inside. This is a rare example of the *phamsana* mode where two almost identical structures are used for the *garbhagriha* and *jagmohan*.

Siva temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, 14th century

Another interesting example of the *phamsana* shrine is a Siva temple almost opposite the Sarvamangala temple at Kesiari. Here two square structures with the *phamsana* roof are used for the *garbhagriha* and *jagmohan* but many variations are made to differentiate from each other and to form a balanced composition (fig. 6.19 and drg.6.4).

The *garbhagriha* structure is *pancharatha* in plan with projections on three sides accommodating a niche while the front one forms the entrance vestibule. The small empty niches on three sides are topped by three tiers of mouldings without any crowning element and

[13] O'Malley, Midnapore, 1911, p. 240.

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Above from left to right
Fig. 6.17: Five tiered roof of the sanctum with complete *mastaka*, Sarvamangala temple, Kesiari, 13th Century.

Fig. 6.18: Five tiered roof of the *jagmohan* with *ghanta* and *kalasha*, Sarvamangala temple, Kesiari, 13th Century.

Drg. 6.4: Side Elevation of the Siva temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 14th Century.

Clockwise
Fig. 6.19: Siva temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, *Phamsana* mode, 14th Century.

Fig. 6.20: *Mukhamandapa* forming the entrance, Siva temple, Kesiari, 14th Century.

Fig. 6.21: *Mandovara* of the sanctum with a niche, Siva temple, Kesiari, 14th Century.

Fig. 6.22: *Mandapa* crowned by low flat tiers, Siva temple, Kesiari, 14th Century.

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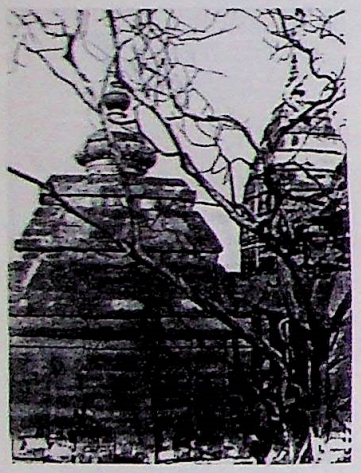
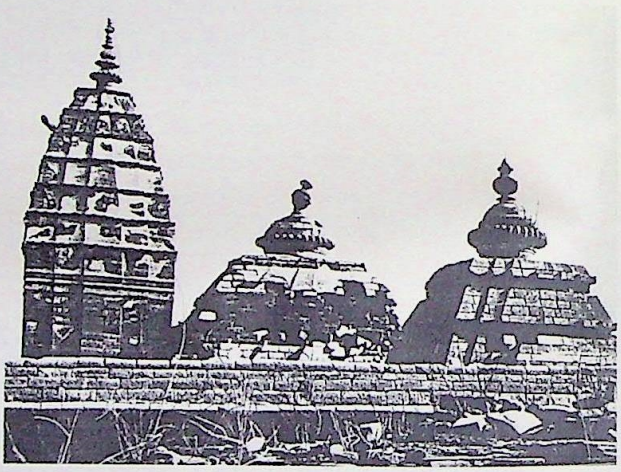
thus not giving any appearance of aedicule (fig.6.21). A plain band of the width of these three mouldings runs around the *jangha* of the temple. The *rathaka* projections on the *mandovara* of the sanctum are carried up on the pyramidal roof also. The tower of the roof consists of three steep tiers with narrow gaps in between. On top of the tiers an elegant *mastaka* sits on a tall cylindrical *griva*, above which a *ghanta*, an *amalaka* and a *kalasha* complete the composition (fig. 6.22).

The *jagmohan* or *mandapa* is a larger square structure with no side projections but only on front forming a small *mukhamandapa*. The *mandapa* is crowned by three nearly flat tiers to avoid being higher than the sanctum roof. But the tower here is also crowned by a *mastaka* on a short *griva* and unlike Sarvamangala temple, here the *mastaka* comprises three parts, a flat *ghanta*, *amalaka* and *kalasha*. The treatment of the small *mukhamandapa* or entrance vestibule makes the temple appear impressive even without any decoration on the walls (fig.6.20). The vestibule is topped by a three-tiered tower, tiers being continued from the mandapa. It has a *kalasha* on top of the tiers suggesting this part to be a precursor of the *mandapa* type with side porches attached to a *phamsana jagmohan* found in Orissan temples and later seen in Bengal also in the temples at Karnagarh, Midnapore (fig.6.30).





Temple no.9, Telkupi site, Purulia, late 14th century: (fig. 6.23, 24, 25)

Left to Right
Fig. 6.23: Temple no.9, Telkupi site, Purulia, *Phamsana* mode, late 14th Century.

Fig. 6.24: Temple no.10, Telkupi site, Purulia, *Mandapa* of *Phamsana* mode, late 14th Century.

Fig. 6.25: Temple no. 9 and 10, General view, Telkupi site, Purulia, late 14th Century.

From the submerged temple site of Telkupi in Purulia district, three structures of the *phamsana* mode are reported by Mitra[14] and Beglar.[15] While the temple no. 9 called the Kali temple used the mode for the sanctum of the temple, the temple no. 8 and 10 used the mode for their *jagmohans*. Mitra dates all these structures to the late fourteenth century.

The Kali temple assumes importance in this study as it shows four tiered base mouldings similar to the ninth century Ektesvara temple signifying the continuity of the tradition over a long period. The roof consists of three large tiers called *pidhas* signifying that the tiers of the *phamsana* roof in Bengal are large and steep instead of flattish Orissan *pidhas* composed of many tiers. The *jagmohan* of the temples 8 and 10 are similar to the temple no. 9 with some changes in the design of the *mastaka* element.

[14] Mitra, Debala. *Telkupi: A Submerged Temple Site in West Bengal*, Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 76. N. Delhi. 1969, pp.20-25.

[15] Beglar, J. D. and Cunningham, A. *Report of a Tour through the Bengal Provinces, Archaeological Survey of India*, volume 8, Calcutta.1878 and Reprint New Delhi. 2000, pp. 169-177.

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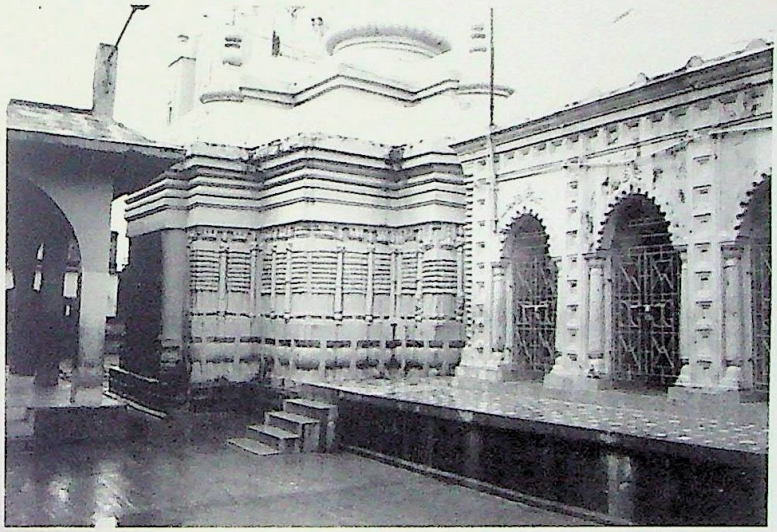

Fig. 6.27: Side Porch, Sarvamangala temple, Garhbeta, Two tier *Mandapa* of *Phamsana* mode, 1550 CE.

Fig. 6.28: Sarvamangala temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, Two tier *mandapa* of *phamsana* mode, 1550 CE.

Fig. 6.29: Raghunath temple, Chandrakona, Midnapore, *Mandapa* of *Phamsana* mode, late 17th Century.

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In the sixteenth century we do not see the *phamsana* mode of temple building used as the sanctum of a temple. However the mode finds expression in *mandapas* attached with the *latina* shrines, but this combination is very rare in Bengal. In the 1550 CE structure (later restored) of the Sarvamangala temple at Garhbeta, Midnapore, the *phamsana* mode is used for the *jagmohan*.[16] The roof of this *jagmohan* is only in two large tiers but it has porches on all sides crowned by a *mastaka* (fig.6.27, 6.28). The *mandapa* of such a design in the *phamsana* mode is also used in Chandrakona (fig.6.29), Karnagarh (fig.6.30) in Midnapore district and Sihar and Bikrampur in Bankura district in the seventeenth century.

As regarding the general characteristics of the *phamsana* shrines in Bengal gathered from the above studies, these temples in Bengal used larger and steeper tiers in the *pidhas*, their number never reaching beyond three. The *phamsana* mode when used for the sanctum was crowned by a complete *mastaka* on a taller *griva*. The projections on the *mandovara* of the sanctum were very shallow but carried over to the top (See drg. 3.5). The temples located closer to the Orissan border used the *pidhas* comprising many flat tiers like the Syamalesvara temple at Dantan and Sarvamangala temple at Kesiari. The Siva temple at Kesiari uses both types of the steep and flat tiers displaying the link of Bengal with Orissa.

As stated earlier, the *phamsana* mode also influenced the early *latina* temples and in the fifteenth century, the *latina* temples with horizontal ridging could be seen at Barakar and Pandra. This phenomenon is also observed on the *phamsana* temples when we see tall pyramidal structures at Belatukri in Bankura and later at Banpas and Sitalpur in South Midnapore. Here the *phamsana* mode develops a similarity to the early *latina deuls* with widely spaced ridging termed by McCutchion as 'tall curvilinear pidha'.[17]

VALABHI MODE

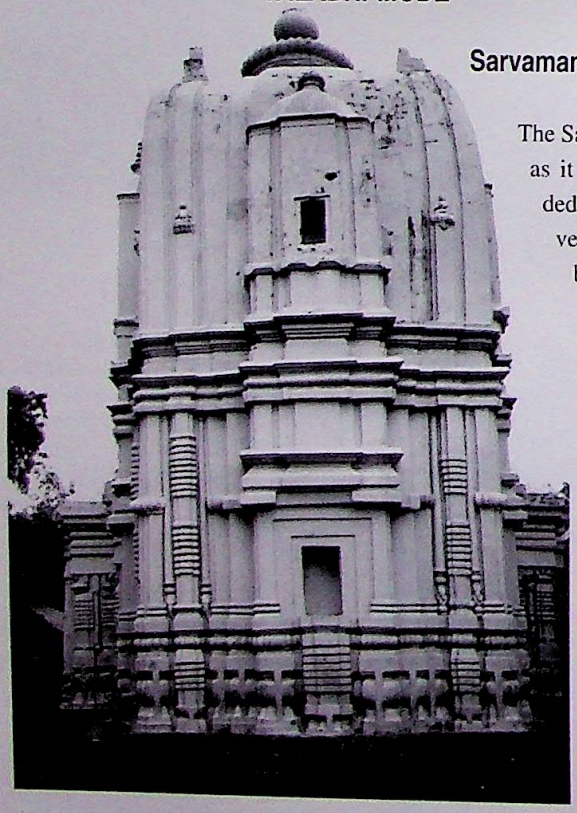

Fig. 6.26: Sarvamangala temple, Sanctum of *Valabhi* mode, Garhbeta, Midnapore, 1550 CE

Sarvamangala temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, 1550 CE

The Sarvamangala temple of Garhbeta is of immense importance as it is the only surviving temple built in the *valabhi* mode dedicated to the mother goddess within the limits of Bengal. A very popular, living Shakti shrine with a rectangular plan has been restored many times but it retains many of its original features (fig.6.26). The sanctum of the temple stands on a three-tiered *pishta* with a four-tiered *vedibandha* very similar to the Rajarani temple of Bhubaneswar. The shrine rises up to thirty feet covered by a barrel-vaulted roof and crowned by a central *mastaka* comprising of an *amalaka* and a *kalasha*. On all four sides of the valabhi shrine a complete *latina* aedicule can be observed starting from the ground reaching up to the middle of the *valabhi* tower. Here modern restoration has obliterated many of the features of the *latina* aedicule but the principle of superimposition is very clear. It is the same composition which is used on the *mandovara* of the brick-built *latina* temples of the *Deul* type in Bengal during the eleventh and twelfth centuries such as at Bahulara and Boram (fig. 5.11, 5.27, drg. 5.2).

[16] O'Malley, Midnapore, 1911, p. 218.
[17] McCutchion, 1972, p. 25.

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Elements of the Bengal Temple Architecture, Housed in Various Museums

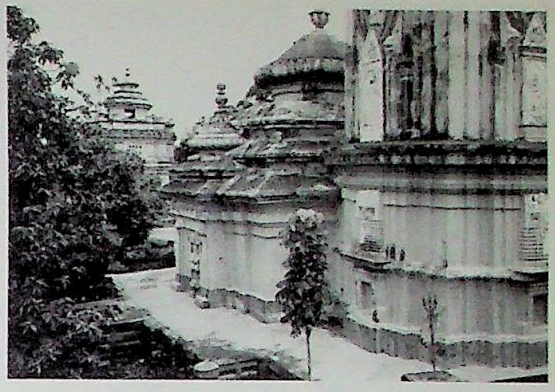

Fig. 6.30: Dandesvara temple, Karnagarh, Midnapore, *Mandapa* of *Phamsana* mode, late 17th Century.

Examples of early architecture of Bengal are rare but the museums of the territory house a fair number of architectural fragments to suggest the extent of architectural activity. Besides the *amalaka shilas*, the *kalashas*, the parts of *lata* of a *shikhara*, the parts of eave mouldings, and base mouldings, which are the obvious parts of any temple, a large amount of pillars and door frames lay scattered throughout the ancient sites of Bengal, are also now preserved in museums. During this study the Indian Museum and Ashutosh Museum in Kolkata, British Museum in London, National Museum, Dacca, State Museums of Patna and Ranchi and the Site Museums at Nalanda, Bodhgaya and Khiching were visited to study the architectural members belonging to the architecture of Bengal. Since these elements are kept in museums, scholars have noticed them and written about them. For the present study these architectural members bear special significance because these are elements of the temple architecture of Bengal and also because of their similarity and comparison with the re-used parts on the mosques and tombs of the later Islamic period.

Pillars

Fig. 6.31: Pillar base in the *Mandapa* of Surya temple Deo, Near Gaya, 8th – 9th century.

Saraswati[18] mentions two types of stone pillars belonging to the Pala epoch - one of the plain and simple character and other of the ornate character. While many pillars of the plain character can be seen in museums and reused in later structures, the ornate ones are rare and are housed in museums only. In the *mandapa* of the Surya temple at Deo near Gaya (fig. 6.31) we see tall pillars used with *gavaksha* decoration on the square base. The geometry of the *gavaksha* here is of importance as such a depiction is used many times on the pillars kept in museums and it shows how the heart shaped *gavaksha* developed from the simple *gavaksha*.

An exquisitely carved pillar from Rajmahal district in Jharkhand is housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata which is very similar to a pillar from Bangarh, now setup in the Dinajpur Rajpalace garden in Bangladesh. The Bangarh pillar base bears an inscription that records the erection of a Siva temple and apparently the pillar belonged to the temple referred in the inscription.[19] By this comparison, the Rajmahal pillar also must have formed a part of an extremely ornate temple. It is of great interest to a student of architecture that parallels of the pillars of such characteristic design are seen at different places and also in the many Pala period sculptures and image niches as pilasters.

The Bangarh and Rajmahal pillars are divided into three parts: a square base, a square capital and a twelve-sided shaft (fig.6.32). The square base contains a richly ornamented vase with lot of scrollwork while the square capital shows a compressed vase or an *amalaka* over rich arabesque work (fig 6.33). The twelve faces of the shaft are also decorated in the top and bottom portions with lotus stems, creepers and a dado consisting of a series of *kirtimukha* motifs with elegant pearl strings hanging down from their mouths. In between

[18] Saraswati, 1976, p.100.

[19] Saraswati, 1976, p. 101. He writes, "The base bears an inscription that records the erection of a temple of God Siva by a lord of Gauda of Kamboja lineage."

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From left to right
Fig. 6.32: Rajmahal pillar of the Pala period,Indian Museum, Kolkata.
Fig. 6.33: Square capital of the Rajmahal pillar, Pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.
Fig. 6.34: Square base of the Rajmahal pillar, Pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.
Fig. 6.35: Temple pillar from Handial, Pabna, Bangladesh, Sena period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

the pearl strings bells are suspending by similar cords (fig.6.34). This feature is used on all pillars and pilasters of this period and was later adopted by the Muslims for the hanging lamp motif in the *mihrab* niches of the Sultanate mosques discussed in the next chapter. The hanging bells are not used on the Rajmahal pillar, but on the four faces of the pillar shaft beautifully carved *nayikas* stand in dancing poses.

The Indian Museum, Kolkata houses a set of four stone pillars almost identical in design presumably part of a *mandapa* of some temple. These were recovered from Handial in the early nineteenth century.[20] The place of provenance in the heart of Islamic Bengal in Pabna district is of great significance as these Sena period pillars perhaps belonged to a Krishna temple and formed part of a *nrityamandapa*. The square base of the pillar bears a niche topped by a *phamsana* roof which houses a deity (fig.6.35). From a comparison of the depiction of Krishna on Paharpur terracotta plaques, this deity appears to be Krishna. At the base of the dodecagonal shaft twelve dancing *nayikas* are carved in high relief. Here we may recall the presence of the Krishna-*Bhakti* traditions in Lakshmana Sena's Bengal of the twelfth century and the writings of Jaydev's *Gita-Govindam*. On this pillar, perhaps we see the best representation of a hanging bell with a chain and pearl strings coming out of the mouth of a *kirtimukha*. Lotus stems, arabesques, scrolls and creepers cover the other parts of the pillar. Such decorative patterns in terracotta works are used in the later Islamic structures almost side by side with many re-used black basalt parts of the earlier structures. We see many such pillars with some decoration used in the Bari Mosque at Chhota Pandua in Hooghly district discussed in chapter seven.

The National Museum, Dacca houses some fine examples of the wood carvers art in Bengal, however specimens are very rare. One remarkable wooden pillar discovered from Arial,

[20] As per the information plaque of the Indian Museum, Kolkata.

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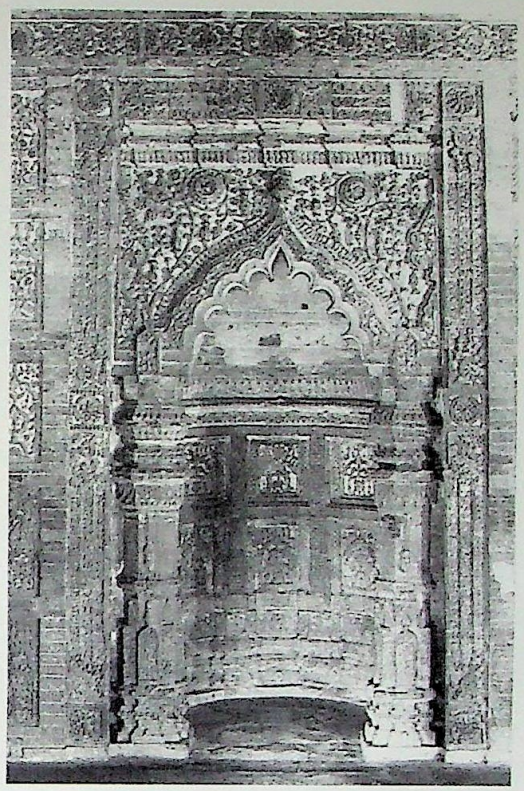

left to right
Fig. 6.36: A pillar from the Pala period,The British Museum, London.

Fig. 6.37: The *mihrab* niche of the Bagha mosque, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, 1523CE.

Dacca district is exquisitely carved like the stone pillars described above. Another notable piece is a wooden bracket recovered from Sonarang, Dacca district which has a *yogasana vishnu* carved on it.[21]

One beautiful specimen of Pala art is housed in the British Museum, London next to an equally ornate niche collected from north Bengal. This pillar is square at base with small central projection forming a *triratha* plan. The shaft is octagonal and covered with carved lotus stems, creepers, hanging bell by a chain. The shaft is divided in the middle by a bold moulding. The capital is octagonal with three tiers of the fine floral mouldings. This design of the pillar was used for the pilasters of the image niches of Hindu temples and was later copied in brick to form the pilasters of the *mihrab* niches in the Sultanate mosques of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The similarity of the pilasters used in the *mihrab* niche of the Bagha mosque (fig.6.37) at Rajshahi built in 1523 CE and the pillar housed in the British Museum, London is too striking and, underlines the role of architectural fragments of the earlier temples in developing the vocabulary of Sultanate architecture in Bengal.

Door Frames:

The extent of architectural activity and later spoliation of it by various factors can be gauged from the large number of stone doorframes collected from the study region belonging to the study period in the various museums of this territory. Such doorways may also be seen in private collections and reused in the later structures. The simple and commonest type of doorway exhibits a division of the surface of the jambs into several vertical bands in the form of running offsets, such bands being carried over and continued on the lintel. Structurally, they are simple post & lintel beam kind of doorframes where vertical bands are used by artists for profuse ornamentation. For more elaborate doorframes, the number

[21] op. cit. p.103.

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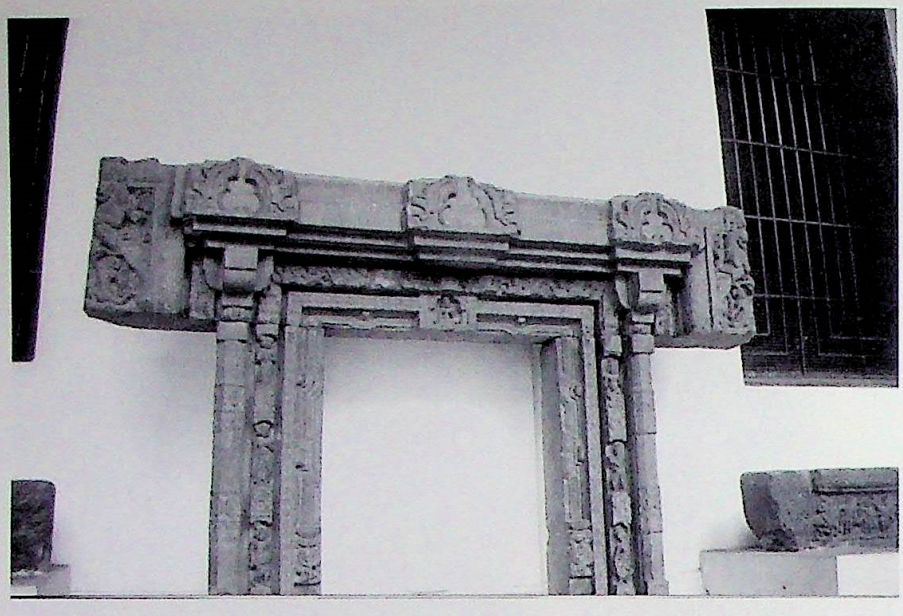

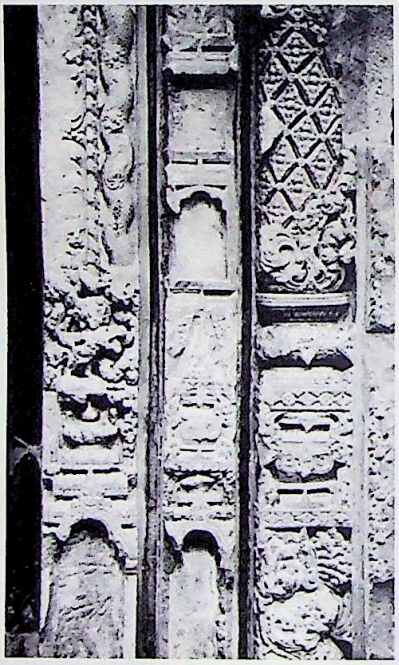

Fig. 6.38: A door frame of the Pala period, North Bihar The Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Fig. 6.39: A Detail of the typical Doorway of the late Pala-Sena period

Fig. 6.40: Vishnu stele and trefoil arched niche, late Pala-Sena period, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (Source: Banerji, Marg, 50)

of vertical bands increased, with each band carved with one subject such as an arabesque, lotus petals, *nayikas* housed in niches one above another, round and diamond shaped rosettes and finally an intertwining serpent motif.

Any decoration on the vertical bands continues on the horizontal lintel which invariably contains a niche in the center occupied by the deity installed in the sanctum, in case of a temple doorway, or of Ganesha. The bottom of the jamb sometimes shows the figure of an attendant deity or of a river goddess in a sculptured niche above which the usual decorations begin (fig.6.39).

In Dinajpur Maharaja's palace a doorway with seven ornamental bands called *Naga Darwaja* is housed. With an intertwining serpent motif starting from the bottom of each post, this is most ornate of all doorways seen or reported in Bengal.

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The Indian Museum at Kolkata (fig.6.38), the site museums of Nalanda, Bodhgaya, Khiching and Ranchi Museum also house this type of doorframes. Amongst the extant structures the temple at Banda, Purulia (fig.4.19) has a similar type of doorframe as housed in the Indian Museum. Debala Mitra's publication about Telkupi also mentions the use of such doorways for the temples of Telkupi.[22] Ancient sites such as Deo (fig.3.8) and Konch in Gaya, Boram in Purulia, Benisagar (fig.4.12) in West Singhbhum district has remains of such doorways. The museum of Varendra Research society of Rajshahi and the National Museum, Dacca houses some of the best-preserved doorways in Bangladesh similar to the ones shown in the sketches in chapter seven.

Image Niches:

Stone niches for images are known to be a common feature in the architecture of the study region. The extant structures at Nalanda, Bodhgaya, Paharpur, Vikramshila all show the use of niches in earlier phases also. In the Pala-Sena period the niche became a very important feature evident by its representation in paintings and sculptures. Just like the doorways many niches are also preserved in the various museums of the world showing a triangular cut in the recessed part. In fact the triangular top of the Pala sculptures was made to fit them into the ornate niches of the period.[23]

By studying the surviving niches of the study period and their depiction on the sculptures and paintings of the period, the general characteristics of these niches may be drawn. These were highly ornate sunken recesses framed by two elaborately decorated pillars supporting a trefoil or circular arch above. These arches were ornately carved and crowned in the center by a *kirtimukha* or *gavaksha*. There were *makaramukha* also seen at the springing point of the arches. Celestial figures, flying or with garlands were used on the spandrels and on sides of the pilasters. Some times such arches of the image niches were crowned by many representations of the *nagara* shrines as discussed in the chapter three (fig. 3.1).

The trefoil arched niches housed in the Indian Museum, Ranchi Museum, British Museum and Ashutosh Museum, and also at the Metropolitan Museum, New York all show sunken recesses forming a space to house a standard size of Pala stele. This is best represented by the perfectly fitting Vishnu stele and trefoil arched niche kept at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York[24] (fig.6.40). The pilasters of the arched niche are similar to other pillars of the Pala-Sena period. This whole composition is crowned by a *latina* shrine of the Barakar type in Bengal. The trefoil arched niche housed in the British Museum, London is crowned by a celestial figure and seems to be from the early Pala period (fig.6.41, 6.42). It has tapering circular pilasters supported on the *purnaghatas* and displays all the general characteristics of the niches of the study period. The similar circular

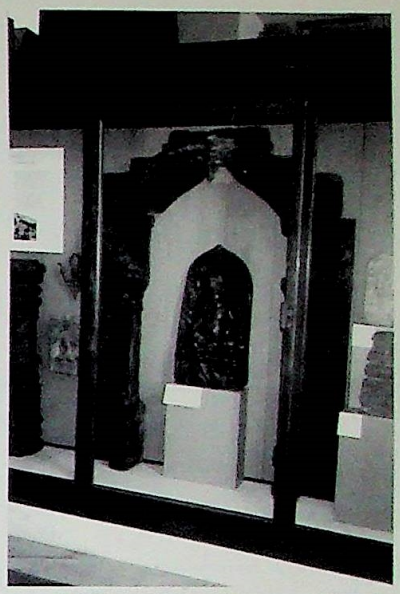

Fig. 6.41: The trefoil arched niche of the early Pala period, The British Museum, London.
Fig. 6.42: Detail of the arch, Image niche, early Pala period,The British Museum, London.
Fig. 6.43: Vishnu stele and trefoil arched niche, Khari, Sunderbans,10th century Ashutosh Museum, Kolkata

[22] Mitra, MASI No. 76, 1969, plate XXXI B.
[23] Huntington, Susan L. *The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain.* New York, Weatherhill, 1985. Chapter eighteen, Bihar and Bengal, Under The Pala and Sena Kings, p. 387-413.
[24] Banerji, Naseem A. "The Mihrabs in the Adina Mosque: Evidence of the Re-use of Late Pala-Sena Remains" *Marg 50* no.3 1999, pp.82-93.

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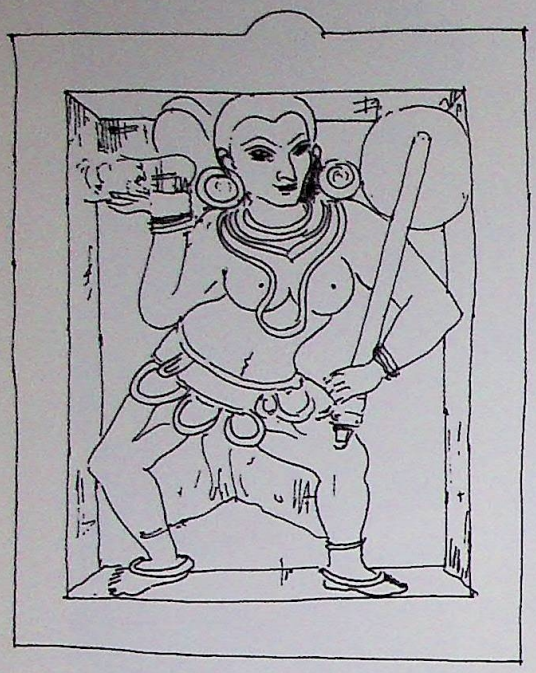

Drg. 6.5: Detail of the Window Grill on both sides carved in stone, Size 45cms X 45 cms, Pala period, Indian Museum, Kolkata.

pilasters may be seen supporting a trefoil arch on the brackets housed in the Ashutosh Museum, Kolkata (fig.6.43). This tenth century niche from Khari, Sunderbans in 24 Pargana district has a Vishnu stele in the niche and crowned by a heart-shaped *gavaksha* on split half *gavakshas*. A few wall niches similar to *jharokhas* on the walls of the the Eklakhi mosque, Pandua and the Dakhil Darwaja, Gaur have spindle shaped pilasters, probably modeled on such pilasters as seen in the niche from Khari (fig.7.35).

The study of these niches or arch surrounds as mentioned by Naseem Banerji assumes great significance because of their reuse in the Islamic structures as the most important principal *mihrab* niches of the mosques and later copied in bricks as found in the Bari mosque at Chhota Pandua, Hooghly and the Bagha mosque at Rajshahi (fig.6.37).

Window Grills:

Among other architectural fragments of the period window grills are seen in many museums. Generally these are of stone forming a lattice pattern but an unusual grill housed in the Indian museum, Kolkata collected from Gaur or Lakhnauti show the use of human figures. It is a square grill with a dancing female figure replicated in mirror image on the other side (drg.6.5). The exquisitely carved figures confirm them to be from the Pala-Sena period and must have formed part of the *mandapa* of a temple. The similarity of this grill with those of the *mandapa* of the Parashurameshvara temple at Bhubaneswar is too striking to ignore but they were from the seventh century.

The above study of the architectural fragments completes the story of the temple architecture of Bengal before the Islamic influences brought some profound changes in the temple architecture of the region. However, it is necessary to study the Islamic architecture in Bengal to understand its influences on the later temple architecture but it is much more important to understand the profound effects of the Hindu temple architecture of the Pala-Sena period on the later Sultanate architecture. The above study of the architectural fragments is actually continued further when we proceed on to the study of the early phase of Islamic architecture in Bengal with large amount of the spolia used in the buildings and discuss its role in developing a vocabulary for Sultanate architecture.¶

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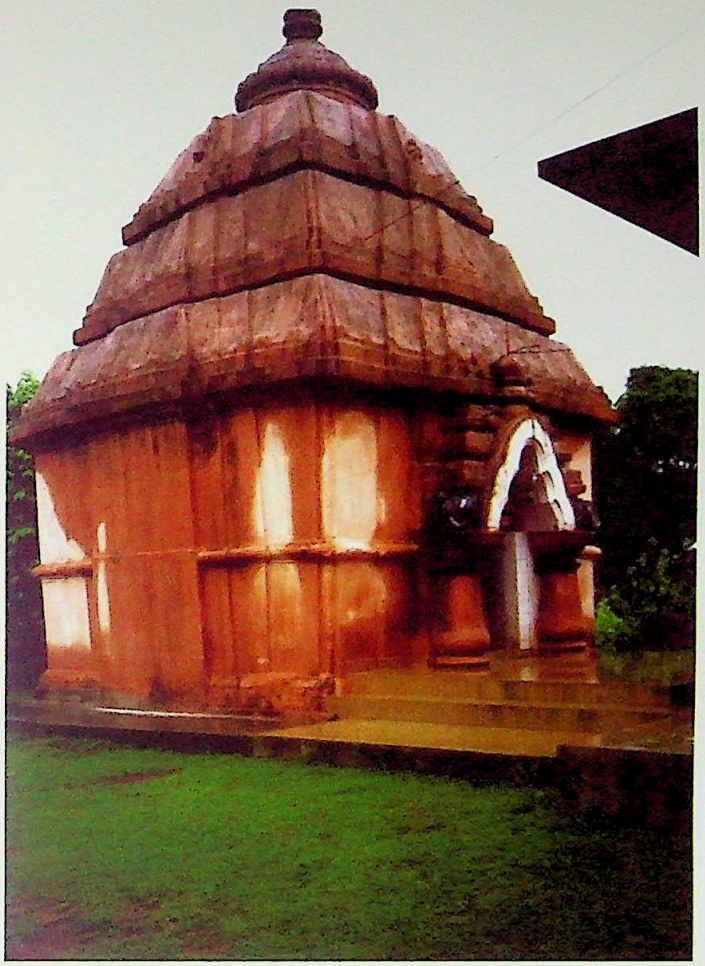

Kangareshwara temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore

Ektesvara temple, Ektesvara, Bankura

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Symalesvara temple, Dantan

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Sarvamangala temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore

Symalesvara temple, Dantan

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Temple pillar from Handial, Pabna, Bangladesh, Indian Museum, Kolkata

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Origin and Development of a new Architectural Vocabulary in Islamic Architecture of Eastern India:

13th to 16th Century

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In the present work on the Hindu temple architecture of Bengal, the subject of Islamic architecture is included in order to examine the sources of Islamic architecture in Bengal and the later influences of the Islamic traditions on the temple traditions of the region. As is widely perceived, the style of building in Bengal during Sultanate rule, from the thirteenth to the middle of sixteenth century developed into a distinct regional style.[1] The process of formation of this style is very significant in view of its perceived distinct character and is being explained here by taking up a few early examples. As observed in the literature review of the subject, Islamic architecture in Bengal is well covered by scholars, hence, the general description of the structures built is not the concern here, but to examine the traits of continuity in the mature phase of Islamic architecture with the earlier tradition. The following analysis uses the works of Dani,[2] Saraswati[3] and Chakravati[4] and takes the help of Catherine Asher's compact inventory[5] and the published plans in the *Islamic Heritage,*[6] and it also refers to some of the recent observations published in the various volumes of the *Journal of Bengal Art.*[7]

It was observed in chapter two that after the Turkish conquest of Bengal in the year 1204 CE by Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad bin Bakhtyar, he established his seat of government at Gaur or Lakshmanavati or Lakhnauti, the capital city of the last Hindu king of Bengal, Lakshmanasena and constructed a few mosques, schools, rest houses and monasteries. The earliest inscription recording the erection of a mosque in Bengal comes from Pichhli,[8] 12 kilometers to the northwest of Malda district, and it informs that the 'blessed building' was built in 1249 CE. Today we do not come across any surviving Islamic structure in Lakhnauti or Pichhli belonging to the period prior to the fourteenth century.

Earlier Islamic rulers of the thirteenth century aimed at communicating a message of brute force to the native population.[9] They did not seek any legitimacy within the framework of Bengali Hindu culture and followed the practices of Delhi and Ajmer. Many earlier structures were dismantled for building material and innumerable images of Hindu Gods and Goddesses were thrown into rivers and tanks. It is not unlikely that in the early phases of Islamic occupation, when the conflict with the new race and culture was still fresh, most of the early Islamic buildings were built and used by appropriating and despoiling pre-Islamic monuments.[10] Even in the fourteenth and fifteenth century buildings we find free use of older materials, pillaged from their original context. Pillars and doorframes had been invariably collected from earlier buildings and figural sculptures were obliterated as will be seen and illustrated in this study with individual monuments.

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[1] Brown, P. *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period.* Bombay, 1956, Chapter VIII, Provincial Style : Bengal 1300AD-1550AD, pp. 35-41.

[2] Dani, A. H. *Muslim Architecture in Bengal.* Asiatic Society of Pakistan Publication no.7, Dacca, 1961.

[3] Saraswati, S. K. "Indo-Muslim Architecture in Bengal." *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art,* volume IX, 1941, pp 12-36.

[4] Chakravarty, Manmohan. "Pre Mughal Mosques of Bengal." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* n.s. VI, 1910, pp.24-8.

[5] Asher, Catherine B. "Inventory of Key Monuments", *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris, 1984, pp. 37-140.

[6] Michell, G, ed. *Islamic Heritage of Bengal.* UNESCO publications, Paris, 1984.

[7] Haque, Enamul. ed. *Journal of Bengal Art*, Volume I (1996) to Volume VII(2003), International Centre for Studies of Bengal Art, Dhaka.

[8] Cunningham, Alexander. *Archaeological Survey of India: Report of a tour in Bihar and Bengal in 1879-80,* vol. XV, reprint, New Delhi, 1994, p. 45.

[9] Eaton, Richard M. "Islam in Bengal", *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris 1984, p.25.

[10] Flood, Finbarr Barry. "Refiguring Islamic Iconoclasm: Image Mutilation and aesthetic Innovation in the Early Indian Mosque," Unpublished but forthcoming article in *Negating the Image* (Ashgate Press), New York. Flood writes about the similar phenomenon in other regions of India and calls the mosques built by appropriating the older materials as 'conquest mosques.' In close similarity with other regions of India, Islamic architecture in Bengal also uses remains of the structures built over a long period of time. See below the study of the Adina mosque and Banerji, 1999.

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In fact the use of architectural elements from pre-Islamic structures on the important Islamic monuments was so extensive that it gave birth to a new set of architectural vocabulary for the later Islamic structures of the Sultanate period. The early structures such as Adina Mosque at Pandua in district Malda and Zafar Khan tomb at Tribeni in district Hooghly were of highest importance and their each and every part inspired the later builders, and the elements used here became the main characteristic features of Islamic architecture in Bengal. Since some of the elements used in earlier Islamic structures were from earlier Hindu/Buddhist structures, hence when copied in the later Islamic buildings, these elements demonstrated the continuity of earlier architectural traditions. There were many innovations made in terms of structural systems, plan forms, non-figural decorations and calligraphy.[11] Such aspects are also covered in this study as they became characteristic features of the Sultanate architecture and continued to be used in the later architecture of the temples in the late mediaeval period (1550 – 1850 CE). For our study the importance of Islamic architecture lies in the study of the continuity of architectural traditions in Bengal. This is done by dividing the Sultanate period in Bengal in two parts on the basis of significant developments that took place in the field of architecture simultaneously with the political developments in Islamic Bengal.

1. Early phase- the period of Delhi Sultanate and independent Bengal Sultanate up to the end of first period of Ilyas Shahi dynasty (1204-1415 CE) during which the re-use of the older material was frequently seen and the new innovations were being introduced.
2. Mature phase- during the fifteenth century from the rise of Raja Ganesh till the end of Husain Shahi dynasty (1415-1538 CE) when the buildings adopted more indigenous characteristics to develop into a regional style.

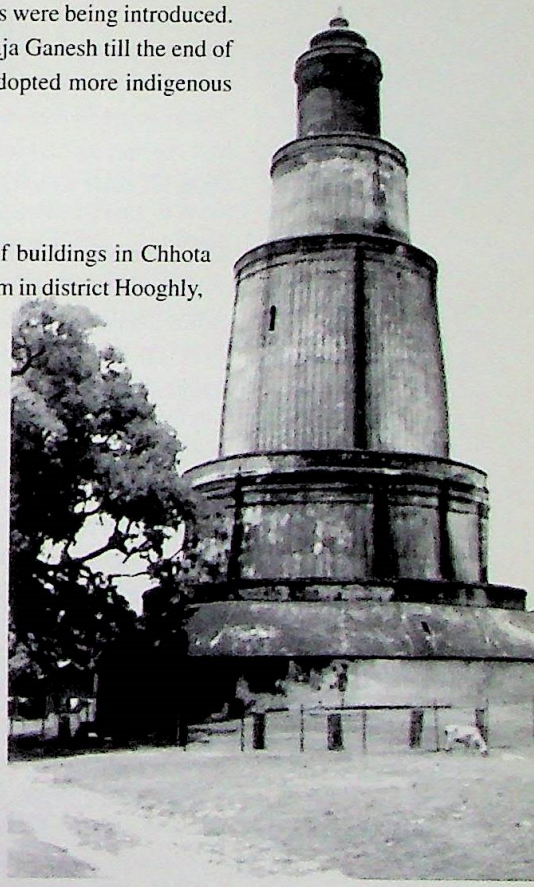

Fig. 7.1: Minar near Bari Mosque at Chhota Pandua, Hooghy, early 14th century.

Early Phase, (1204-1415 CE)

In the first period, we come across the earliest surviving group of buildings in Chhota Pandua and Tribeni in the near vicinity of the port town of Saptagram in district Hooghly, formerly the area being an important centre of Hindu civilisation in South Bengal.[12] A group of structures at Dinajpur in Bangladesh belonging to the early phase was built with re-used materials. The Chehelgazi mosque and Mahalbari mosque are two notable examples at Dinajpur.[13] Along with the Adina mosque at Hazrat Pandua, the principal mosque at Chhota Pandua and the mosque and tomb at Tribeni form a group of structures that guided later architecture. The following is a brief description of the structures analysed in this phase.

Bari Mosque and Minar at Chhota Pandua, Hooghy, early 14th century: (fig.7.1-7.4) In Chhota Pandua, a 140 feet high tower was a part of the town's principal mosque called Bari Masjid, and displayed the power of the new ruling class and aimed at propagating the new religion of Islam. The long rectangular Bari mosque with a twenty-one arched façade used small domes on brick pendentives to form sixty-six bays. Two rows of forty-four

[11] The calligraphy used in Islamic Bengal is called 'Tughra style.' For details see, Ahmad Ali, "Tughra Lipishoili: Utpatti o Bikash" *Bangladesh Asiatic Society Patrika* (Bangla) vol.16. Part 1, June, 1998. p.4

[12] Ray Aniruddha. "Morphology of Mediaeval Saptagram or Satgaon". *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol.4, 1999, pp.217-33.

[13] Alamgir Khoundkar. "Indigenous and Extraneous elements of Sultanate Architecture of Bengal," *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol 4, 1999, pp.271-283.

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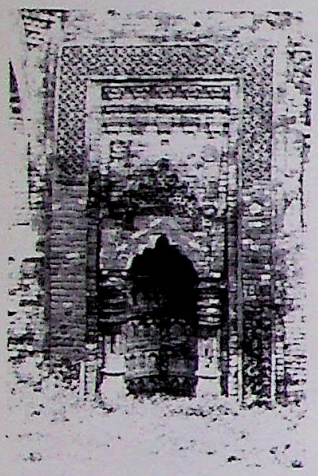

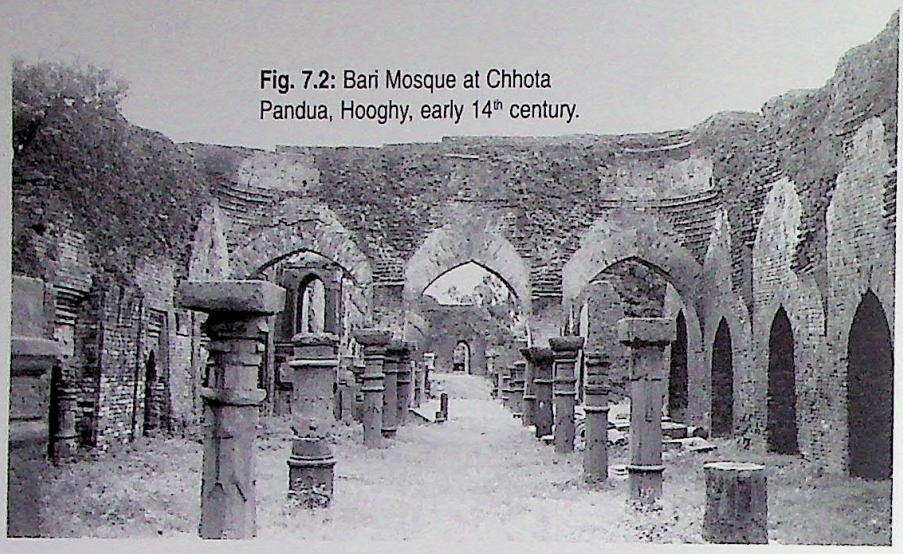

Fig. 7.2: Bari Mosque at Chhota Pandua, Hooghy, early 14th century.

Fig. 7.3: Detail of the Re-used Pillars, Bari Mosque, Chhota Pandua, Hooghy, early 14th century.

Fig. 7.4: Detail of the *Mihrab*, Bari Mosque, Chhota Pandua, Hooghy, early 14th century.

basalt pillars of the earlier structures divide the mosque in three aisles, each of twenty-one bays having a brick carved *mihrab* on the *qibla* wall.

The Islamic remains at Tribeni are on a mound and seem to occupy an earlier centre of the settlement.[14] Owing to its position at the junction of the three streams- hence the name- Tribeni acquired great sanctity, and many religious buildings grew up in its neighbourhood. Now, on this mound we see two structures, a mosque and a tomb in an enclosure called Mazar of Zafar Khan Ghazi.

Zafar Khan Ghazi's Mosque, Tribeni, Hooghly, 1298 CE: (fig. 7.5-7.8) This mosque is dated from 1298 CE[15] and seems to have been repaired many times. It has a five arched façade supported on massive basalt piers and divided into two aisles by lighter basalt piers. The design of the principal *mihrab* of the mosque is curious as it re-uses a stone doorframe for its frame described below (fig. 7.8).

Zafar Khan Ghazi's Tomb, Tribeni, Hooghly, early 14th century: (fig. 7.9-7.11) The structure is composed of two square chambers without any roof. The lower part up to the lintel level is built of basalt and seems to have been an elegant structure of ashlar masonry on a *vedibandha* comprising of four tiers. At cardinal points the structure re-uses many doorframes of earlier structures described below.

The further stage in the evolution of Islamic architecture in Bengal is seen in the Islamic capital at Pandua. The frequent attacks on Lakhnauti or Gaur by rivals prompted Sikandar Shah, the second Sultan of the Ilyas Shahi dynasty, to shift his capital 26 kilometers to the north at Pandua, which was site of an earlier Hindu settlement.[16] The new Muslim capital was started with the construction of the congregational mosque, Adina as its focal point, in 1364CE.

Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE: (see fig. 7.12, 7.13) The imposing monument was built to serve many purposes and one of them is evident in the re-use of good deal of

[14] Saraswati, 1941, p.13.
[15] Ibid. p.13
[16] Possibly the site of Ramavati, the capital of the Pala king Rampala of the eleventh century.

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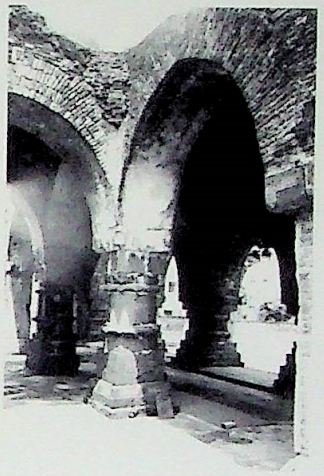

Clockwise
Fig. 7.5: Zafar Khan Ghazi's Mosque, Tribeni, Hooghly, late 13th century.

Fig. 7.6: Detail of the pendentive supporting domes, Ghazi's Mosque, Tribeni

Fig. 7.7: Detail of the two types of pillars, Ghazi's Mosque, Tribeni, late 13th century.

Fig. 7.8: Detail of the *mihrab* with a re-used doorframe, Ghazi's Mosque, Tribeni, late 13th century.

carved stone elements from pre-Islamic monuments and the probable use of the plinth of an earlier edifice as suggested by plinth mouldings.[17] This mosque is also likely to have been a statement directed at Sultan Sikandar Shah's distant Muslim audience, his former overlords in Delhi, now bitter rivals. After successfully defending his kingdom from Delhi's armies, Sikandar projected his claims of power and independence by erecting this monument greater in size than any edifice built by his north Indian rivals. Measuring almost 500 feet by 310 feet externally and with an immense courtyard of 400 feet by 155 feet surrounded by a screen of arches and 370 domed bays, the Adina mosque was much larger than the Delhi's Begumpur mosque, the principal mosque of Sultan Firuz Tughluq (1351-1388 CE) in size.[18] In fact, the Adina mosque remains the largest mosque ever built in the Indian subcontinent with its large courtyard resembling the urban square of an Islamic town.

The imposing *qibla* wall of the mosque is faced with dressed black basalt to three-quarters of its height and is full of re-used carved stones described below. One important feature of the Adina mosque was an area on right of the central prayer hall called *badshah ka takht* and might have acted as ladies chamber[19] or for the Sultan and his immediate family. The entrance to this raised *badshah ka takht* is through a square structure of nine bays on the west of *qibla* wall with an L-shaped ramp on its north. The doorframe used for the square structure and the two doorways for entering the *takht* are re-used parts of some Hindu temple (fig.7.16). The above structures at Chhota Pandua, Tribeni and Hazrat Pandua can be analysed as a group taking up each of following parts: Plan forms, Materials, Construction, Plinth and base mouldings, Walls and wall treatment, Doorframes, Pillars,

[17] Saraswati, 1941, p.15 and Banerji, Naseem A. *Architecture of the Adina Mosque at Pandua, India.* Mellen Press, New York, 2003.
[18] Asher, 1984, p. 109.
[19] Dani, 1961, p.67.

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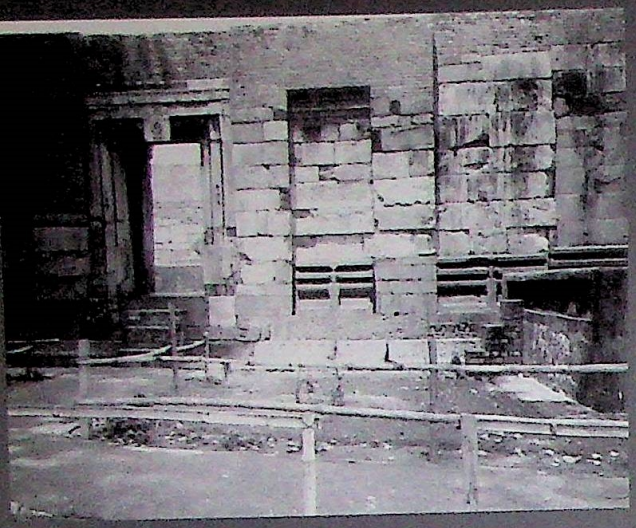


Clockwise

Fig. 7.9: Zafar Khan Ghazi's Tomb on a re-used plinth, Tribeni, Hooghly, early 14th century.

Fig. 7.10: Re-used temple doorframe and base mouldings,

Fig. 7.11: Detail of the Re-used temple doorframe and wall treatment, Ghazi's Tomb, Tribeni, Hooghly.

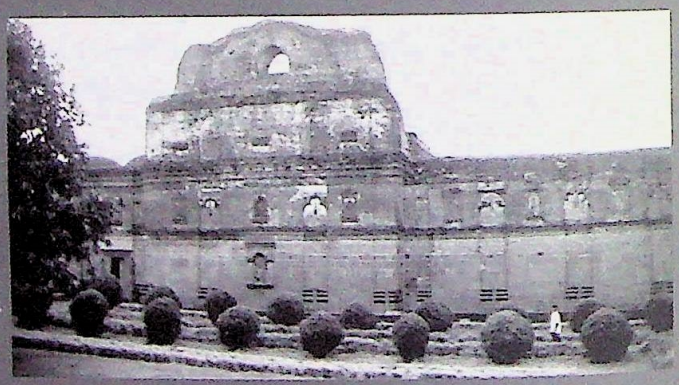
Fig. 7.12: Fallen cloisters and large courtyard, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda, 1375 CE.

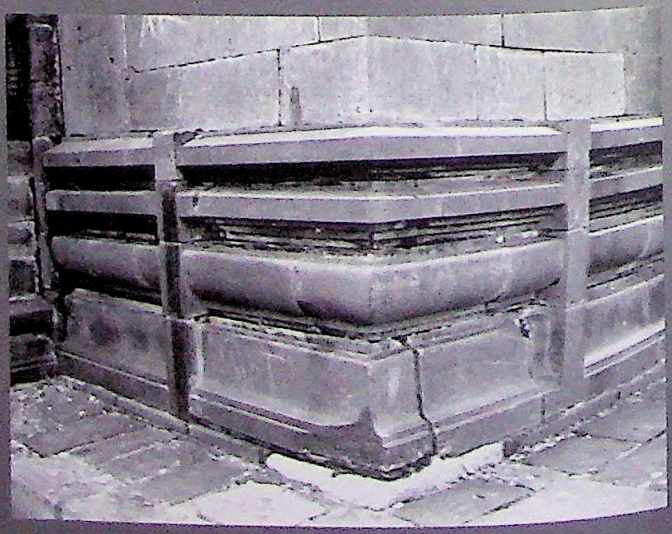
Fig. 7.13: Back of the west wall and the central prayer chamber, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.14: Detail of the base mouldings at a corner on the west wall, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.15: Detail of the wall and wall treatment, West wall, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.16: A temple doorframe re-used on the west wall, shows plugholes and vents for molten metal, Adina Mosque.





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Arches, Corner towers, Cornice and Decorative elements and motifs presented on Pilastered and arched niches, Arch frames, Spandrels, Tympanums. The indigenous elements in the each part are described with the innovations created by the Islamic builders such as the design of heavy piers and the structural aspects.

Building in bricks had been practiced in eastern India for a very long time as the numerous remains of Buddhist *stupas, viharas* and Hindu temples are abundant proof. Even in this early phase of Islamic architecture fine brickwork is used in construction of arches, pendentives and domes.

Plan Forms

In the above studied group in Bengal all three mosques were oblong in plan with aisles and bays formed by pillars and arches above them. The size of each bay was limited and the arches never spanned more than four meters. The courtyard of the Adina mosque faces the screen of arches all around with a central gateway type arch formed at the end of barrel vault of the central chamber. The plan forms of this group of mosques were directed by their intended use but a large open court proved to be unsuitable for the climate of Bengal and the builders of the Sultanate period in Bengal later abandoned this plan.

The double square room plan[20] of the Tomb of Zafar Khan Ghazi is due to the re-use of the plinth of an existing building which is evident in the treatment of the plinth and base mouldings described below.

Materials

The material used in this phase is basalt stone and bricks. The stone used is mainly from the earlier structures. Percy Brown writes, "None of the stonework is original, it was all stripped from pre-existing Hindu structures at Lakhnauti and Pandua. It is very doubtful whether the Muslim overlords ever obtained any of their stones from the natural sources of Rajmahal quarries, all their masonry being evidently composed of readymade spoils. There is good reason to believe that all the three hundred pillars used in the Adina mosque have been appropriated from Hindu structures."[21] The Rajmahal stone quarries located in a small Hindu kingdom on south of Ganges in present state of Jharkhand remained out of bounds for Muslim Sultans till the middle of the fifteenth century.

In case of Zafar Khan Ghazi's tomb the same methods were employed. However bricks were used for the construction of arches above the stone bases. Building in bricks had been practiced in eastern India for a very long time as the numerous remains of Buddhist *stupas, viharas* and Hindu temples are abundant proof. Even in this early phase of Islamic architecture fine brickwork is used in construction of arches, pendentives and domes. But the best brickwork and terracotta relief work is seen on the *qibla* wall of the Adina mosque. The traditional art of terracotta decoration was revived by the Islamic patrons and is used on the Adina mosque in very finely chiseled floral and geometric designs in the high tympanums of arches above the *mihrabs*.

Construction

One important feature of these mosques was the methods by which most of these structures were roofed as the earlier system of trabeated construction with columns and beams was abandoned and arcuated system with arches and domes was introduced by Muslims. The plan of the arched bays was an arrangement inviting the cross vaulting but with the exception of the Adina mosque, this was not adopted. Instead small domes were raised

[20] All plans of the structures discussed in this study may be seen in *Islamic Heritage* in the section by Asher, 1984. These plans are general sketches indicating major features.
[21] Brown, 1956, p.37.

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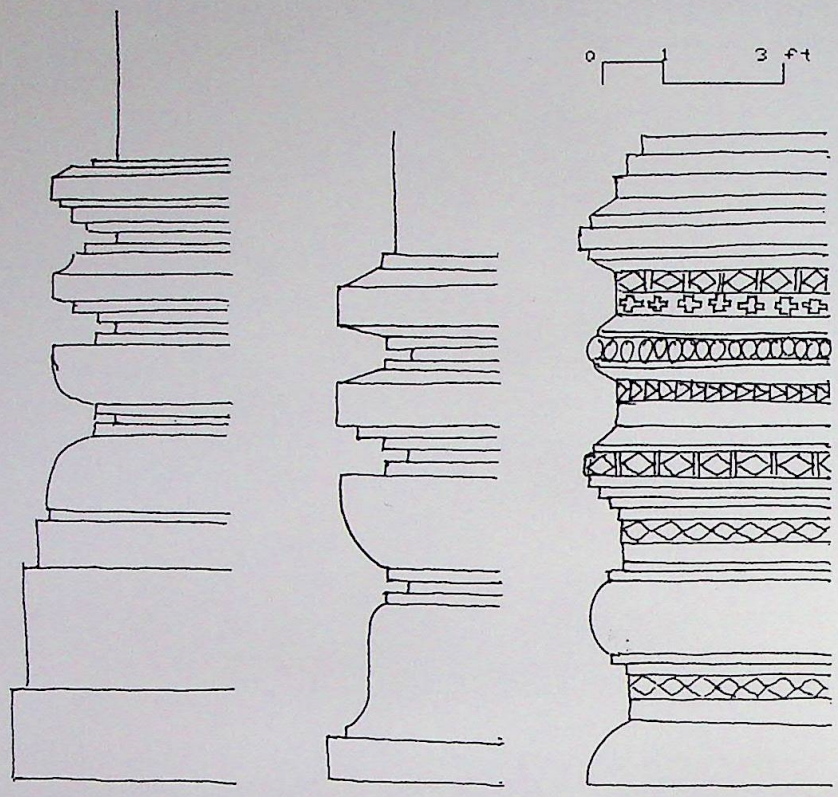

Drg. 7.1: Detail of the base mouldings, Zafar Khan Ghazi's Tomb, Tribeni.
Drg. 7.2: Detail of the base mouldings, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda, 1375 CE.
Drg. 7.3: Detail of the base mouldings, Gumpti Darwaja, Gaur, 1430s CE.

over each bay supported by pendentives of an interesting kind (fig.7.6). These pendentives were formed of bricks laid in over-sailing courses, the bricks in each alternate course being set diagonally so that their corners project, a process of transition from square to circular already employed in some of the buildings in Delhi.[22] The plan of the central nave in the Adina mosque and the remaining roof pattern on the *qibla* wall suggests that the roof of the hall was a superb pointed vault, which might have been the first of its kind in India.

Plinth and Base mouldings

The principal mosque at Chhota Pandua and the mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi are built without any high plinth but the tomb of Zafar Khan Ghazi and the Adina Mosque have very prominent plinth curiously studied by scholars.[23] The three-tier finely carved plinth mouldings are composed of typical parts of any Hindu temple mouldings called *khura-kumbha, kalasha* and *kapotapali*. In the tomb at Tribeni, the mouldings start at higher level, the highest tier marking the plinth level. It has been executed very elegantly at the corners and runs all around the monument. The intricate *vedibandha* of the tomb which is not seen on the mosque nearby has generated the belief that the tomb re-uses the plinth of an existing building[24] which seems quite likely (fig.7.10 and drg.7.1).

In Adina mosque, the plinth mouldings are exactly similar to the Tribeni tomb and run around the west, south and north sides but are absent on the east side (fig.7.14 and drg.7.2). It is difficult to establish whether the Tribeni tomb and the Adina mosque used the plinth

[22] Seen in the Iltutmish tomb for the first time in Delhi in the thirteenth century.
[23] Saraswati, 1941, p.16 and Chakravarti, 1910, p. 24-8 and Dani, 1961, p. 69. Interestingly many other works have not even mentioned this so important feature on the Tribeni tomb and on the west wall of the Adina mosque.
[24] Asher, 1984, p.136.

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of an earlier Hindu structure but what is certain that the mouldings used in these buildings are of Hindu origin and therefore shows the continuity of the architectural tradition for religious buildings. This type of mouldings are later built in bricks and covered with fine terracotta plaques seen on the Eklakhi tomb, Pandua and the Dakhil Darwaza at Gaur.

Walls and wall treatment

Along with the plinth, another notable feature of the architecture of this phase was the treatment of the wall spaces which have been conceived and carried out in a simple but very refined manner. In the Zafar Khan Ghazi's tomb at Tribeni, on the wall spaces, at intervals, plain flat buttresses having little projections, were imposed, interesecting both the mouldings of the plinth below and the cornice above (fig.7.10). This procedure divided the wall surface into a series of shallow sunk panels, within each of which was placed an ornamental foliated arch. It shows an appreciation of the plain spaces and their value in emphasizing the structural proprieties of a building, which is rare in Indian architecture,[25] and in this instance is further proof that the building art under the Pala-Sena patronage was produced with great intelligence. Later Islamic patrons not only received the material remains but also a very rich heritage of the traditions of architecture.

In the Adina moque at Hazrat Pandua the external face of the west wall has been treated similarly but with a little difference on the flat buttresses at upper level (fig.7.15). Here a cornice with hanging pearl string motif modeled on a *kirtimukha* spitting pearl strings divides the elevation in to two halves. The lower half is flat with sunken panels having mouldings but the upper half above the cornice is exquisitely decorated in brick and terracotta work. The sunken panel has trefoil-arched niche with hanging lamp motif, whereas the projected part has in the rectangular panels, arched and pilastered niches with *jali* patterns carved simulating the windows of the upper storey of any palace. Above these panels the whole building has a continuous band of cornice mouldings. Between two cornice mouldings the space is filled with a row of miniature niches as seen in the *latina* temples of the Telkupi type in Bengal on the *kantha* between two *varandika* mouldings while underneath the cornice is a continuous pattern of lattice work.

The above described wall treatment and plinth mouldings of the Tribeni tomb and the Adina mosque acted as model for the exterior decoration of any structure built in the Sultanate period in Bengal. This treatment reached its zenith in the mature phase of Islamic architecture in Bengal on the Eklakhi tomb at Pandua built in bricks. In many of its features such wall treatment and base mouldings represent the continuity of the traditional building practices prevalent since the Pala-Sena period.

Doorframes

The post and lintel stone doorframes used in this phase of Islamic architecture are all taken from earlier Hindu structures. Their use was very extensive and in the later phases of Islamic architecture in Bengal their patterns were copied in terracotta works, and later seen on the terracotta temples of the late mediaeval period. In Tribeni mosque these doorframes are not used except a frame for the *mihrab* niche but in the tomb of Zafar Khan Ghazi seven such doorframes are used at all cardinal points (fig.7.10, 7.11). In the Adina mosque three doorways used on the west wall are elaborately carved but many simple post and lintel doorways are also used (drg. 7.13, 7.14).

[25] An almost similar appreciation is seen on the remains of the Pala period in Nalanda.

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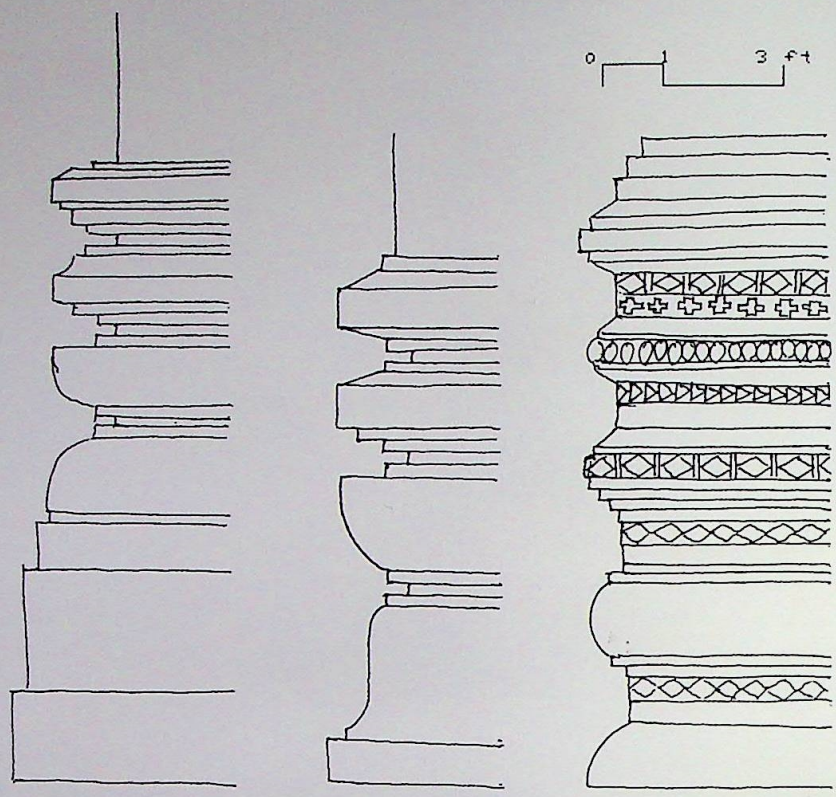

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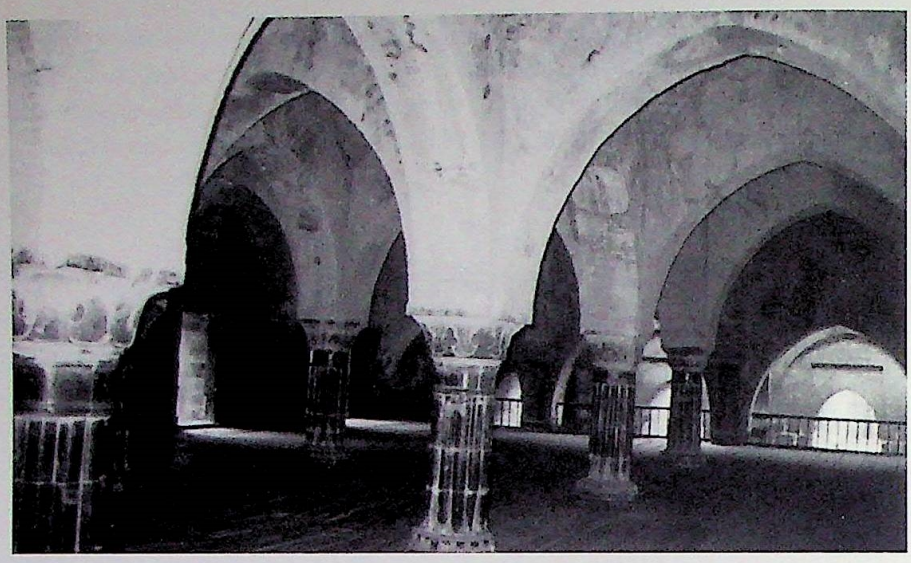

Fig. 7.17: *Badshah ka takht* and pillars with fluted shaft and lotus capital, Adina Mosque

The elaborately carved doorways of the Tribeni tomb and the Adina mosque might have earlier formed the entrance of the cella of Hindu temples as seen in the remains of the Pala period temples at Boram and Telkupi. On the doorframe of the Zafar Khan's tomb a moulding formed of the rope like convolutions of the *seshanaga* surrounds the jambs, with a close and realistic cluster of the same coils comprising the lintel stone. On many doorframes the central figure of Ganesha can be easily identified at the centre of lintel stone. On the more elaborate doorframes, outside the snake emblem jamb, there is a series of trefoil niches, and, wherever required, are scrolls of foliage, enclosing various symbolic forms, among which an interpretation of the *purnaghata* of the Guptas may be identified (fig.7.16). On the less decorated doorways the bow motif series evolved from the lotus patterns is carved on the outermost jambs continuing on the posts and lintel also (drg. 7.14).

On the west wall, a doorframe of the Adina mosque displays the rich beauty of the design and exhibits a very important expedient employed by the Hindu masons for their stone construction. Within the lintel, exposed by fracture, it revealed a system of channels, vents, and plugholes, for the purpose of enabling molten metal to be poured in, and for the course of stone to be joined in this manner (fig.7.15, drg.7.15). Bonding by means of dowels such as bronze dowels and copper cramps, is usual, but the process shown in this example, and probably freely employed in their architecture, is unusual. In the absence of good quality stone architecture in the later periods this method is not seen in later architecture.

Pillars

In the principal mosque at Chhota Pandua nearly all pillars are re-used and the imagery on them shows that they belong to Hindu temples (fig.7.2, 7.3, drg.7.8). The forty-four pillars used here are not of the uniform size and shape but still display similar design. Small miniature temples, foliage and vases can be seen above the base of the column showing close similarity with the pillars from Handial, Pabna housed in the Indian Museum, Kolkata. These pillars from the religious buildings of the Pala-Sena period seem to have been models for many later pillars used in the Islamic structures.

The pillars used in the Adina mosque are very short ponderous piers rather than pillars, abnormally thick, square above and below and surmounted by massive bracket capitals (fig.7.18, drg.7.9). These pillars are remarkable productions, not monolithic, as were nearly

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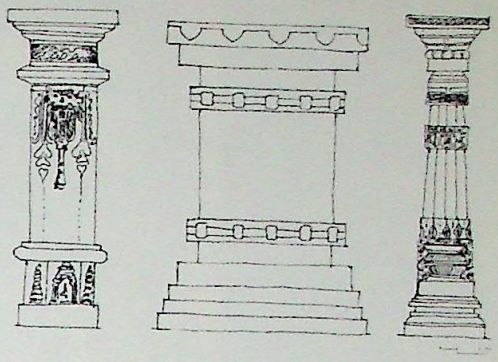
all the pillars of this period, but built up of stone masonry in the most expert manner. Most of them have octagonal shaft on a square base, strong solid constructions averaging nine feet in height three feet in width, such unusually thickset proportions being evidently so devised in order to support a heavy load, presumably a building in several stories.[26] The style of the capitals is in keeping with the shafts, which are also massive but simple in design consisting of plain mouldings with brackets of leaf scrolls. In the Tribeni mosque similar short and thick pillars are used on the external screen of arches but the pillars used in the middle of two aisles are of lesser thickness (fig. 7.7).



Drg. 7.8: Re-used Pillar, Bari Mosque, Chhota Pandua, Hooghy.

Drg. 7.9: Masonry pillar, Adina mosque, Pandua.

Drg. 7.10: Pilaster, Principal Mihrab, Adina mosque, Pandua.

On the other hand the pillars forming the upper level of the *badshah ka takht* in the Adina mosque are of usual proportions (fig.7.17), with graceful fluted shafts and expanding lotus capitals but they are also not monolithic and display great skills of stone masonry.

Percy Brown[27] clearly states that these pillars were from some larger secular buildings of the Pala-Sena period but their masonry construction suggests that they were built on their position only and were not bodily lifted like other pillars, decorative elements and doorframes. It may be possible that the Hindu craftsmen building domes and arches for the first time devised these thick piers on the model of the Pala-Sena pillars with a square base and capital and an octagonal shaft. They provided them with extra strength to support the high arches of the Adina mosque those were certainly higher than the temple porches and *mandapas*, the Hindu craftsmen were so used-to of supporting on the monolithic pillars. These pillars of the Adina mosque became a feature of Islamic architecture of the later phases in Bengal and we see many stone and brick pillars of such shape and size. Together with 'drop arches' these pillars later formed three-arched entrances of the later brick temples in Bengal.

Arches

In the pre-Islamic remains we see the use of trefoil-arched niches used with miniature temple forms and later in Islamic remains, they are again visible in the re-used frames of the image niches of Hindu temples in the *mihrabs* of mosques. The cusped and multi-foliated arches were also seen in the *mihrab* niches built in brick, but they were not used in Bengal as structural arches. In fact the first use of the structural arches in Bengal is seen in the Bari mosque of Chhota Pandua and in the Tribeni mosque. In the Adina mosque arches are higher than the earlier arches and this type of arch was later followed in the building art of Bengal throughout its course. It is very graceful form of what is known as the 'drop arch', with its centres at the import level and with its span greater than its radius. This type of arch and the arcaded aisles and screens provided for the interior architecture of the mosques.

Fig. 7.18: Heavy stone masonry piers supporting the 'drop arches', Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

[26] Brown, P. *Indian Architecture: Buddhist and Hindu Periods*. Bombay, 1965, chapter 31- The Brahmanical Buildings of Bengal (8th to 17th centuries), p.152.
[27] Ibid. p.152.

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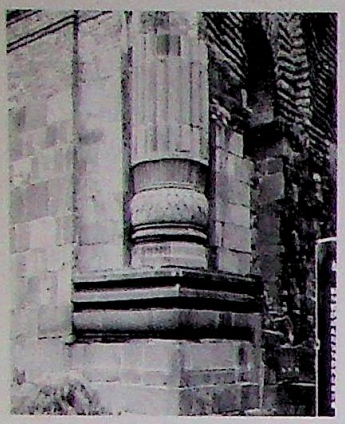

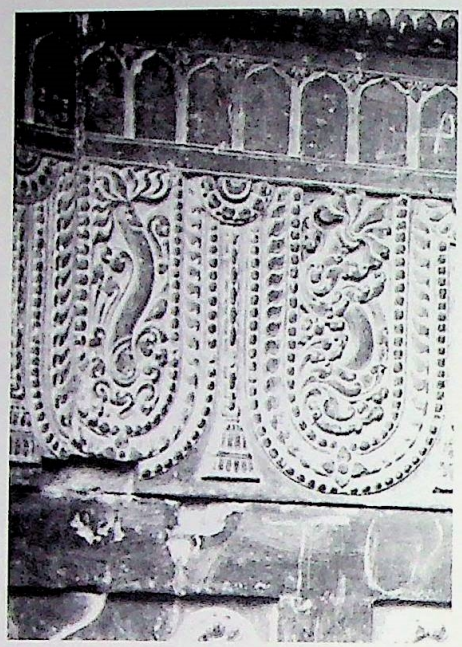

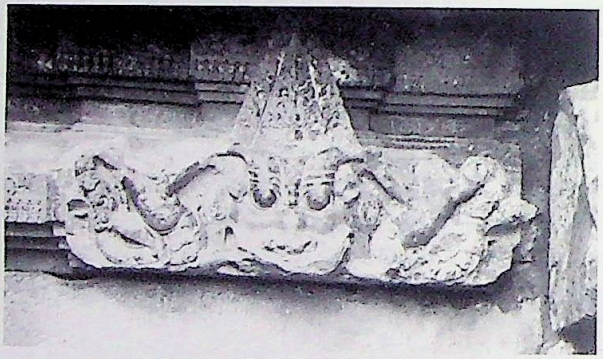

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Fig. 7.19: Detail at the corner with a fluted tower and base mouldings, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.20: The Principal *mihrab* niche with a late Pala-Sena trefoil, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.21: Detail of the concave interior of the Principal *mihrab* niche, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua.

Fig. 7.22: The *Kirtimukha* stone removed from the top of niche, Principal *mihrab*, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua.

Fig. 7.23: The replaced stylized *Kirtimukha* on the top of niche, Principal *mihrab*, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua.

Corner towers

The projecting corner towers are not used in this early phase of building but the Adina mosque has corner towers which are engaged within the rectangular plan of the mosque and are not attached from outside (fig.7.19). Here a squat *kalasha* forms the base, while the circular shaft has convex flutings as seen in the minaret at Chhota Pandua. The whole arrangement rises over an elegant corner that has the plinth mouldings continuous with the whole plinth of the mosque. In later phase of Bengal architecture these towers project out of the square or rectangular plan of the buildings.

Pilastered and arched niches

The *mihrab* niches of the mosques are the main objects of decoration in this period. There were many similar pilastered and arched niches seen on the exterior of west wall of Adina mosque. Naseem Banerji has shown in her study[28] that out of forty-one *mihrabs* on the west wall of the Adina mosque, thirty-five use the older architectural parts and are the examples of skillful combination of old and new materials. Their surrounds, which are older parts of the structures of various periods, have been divided into three groups on the

[28] Banerji, Naseem A. "The Mihrabs in the Adina Mosque: Evidence of the Re-use of Late Pala-Sena Remains" *Marg 50* no.3 1999, pp.82-93.

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basis of style, the post-Gupta period, the early Pala-Sena period, and the late Pala-Sena period.[29] All the *mihrabs* of the later mosques built in Bengal are modeled on the basis of these *mihrabs* showing continuity in Bengal architecture.

For our study, here we can carefully study the elements of the principal *mihrab* of the Adina mosque, which has a surround of the late Pala-Sena period and which has guided the decorations of all the *mihrabs* of later mosques (fig.7.20-7.23, drg.7.17). It has a double arch, the inner one of which is recessed within the outer arch. While the outer arch is an elegant Pala trefoil, the inner one is pointed and penta-foiled and represent the skilful combination of new and old materials. Three bands of relief carving followed by a fourth plain band frame the trefoil outer arch. At the centre of these bands of decoration, at the apex of the arch is a stylized *kirtimukha*. Banerji[30] has shown that the earlier *kirtimukha* with tiered back is placed below the steps of the pulpit kept on the right of the principal *mihrab* which matches correctly at the place where it belonged once (fig. 7.22, 7.23). The *vidyadharas* on either side of the lower lobes of the arch have been mutilated as also the *makaramukhas*.

The outer arch is supported on pilasters that have cruciform-shaped capitals which are recessed on their upper and lower edges. The concave interior of the niche is divided into an upper and lower section. The upper one third has relief carvings of vegetal patterns and looped garlands. The lower two-thirds of the interior has four rows of rectangular frames, each of which has a multi-foiled niche and hanging lamp modeled on the hanging bell and chain motif.

In the Adina mosque the thirteenth *mihrab* from the north side is also an example of the re-use of older material (fig.7.24). This *mihrab* also has a double arch; the inner one being penta-foiled while the outer one is trefoiled which is supported on similar carved pilasters as of the principal *mihrab*. On the exterior of the column bases, figures of Ganga and

Left to right

Fig. 7.24: The thirteenth *mihrab* with a late Pala-Sena surround, *Phamsana* top, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.25: Detail of the base of the pilaster, thirteenth *mihrab*. Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.26: Arch frame of the Principal *mihrab*, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

[29] Meister, Michael. "The "Two-and-a-half-day" Mosque", *Oriental Art*, N. S. 18/1, 1972, pp.57-63. In this article also Meister has shown that the mosque at Ajmer re-uses spolia of various periods suggesting the despoliation of the earlier structures by various factors including desecration.

[30] Banerji, 1999, p. 91.

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Jamuna can be seen with the miniature *phamsana* shrines (fig.7.25). Unlike the principal *mihrab* surround, the area above this *mihrab* arch has a series of receding storeys in imitation of the *phamsana shikhara* of a *nagara* temple. Representations of the stepped pyramidal *shikharas* called *pidha* in Bengal are seen in Pala-Sena painting and decorative art.[31] Many such examples are described in chapter three as the *phamsana* mode of the *nagara* temples.

The Bari mosque at Chhota Pandua for the central *mihrab* uses decoration as on the *mihrabs* of the Adina mosque without the hanging lamp motif, very elegantly done in brickwork and terracotta plaques (fig.7.4, drg.7.19). In the Tribeni mosque, the *mihrab* niche uses a doorframe of an earlier structure and the flat surfaces of it are carved with calligraphy. A pointed arch supported on two stone pillars forms the niche. The red stones forming the arch are carved with three triangle multi-foliated arch patterns, which we see above the composite lintel of the Adina mosque in a larger scale (fig.7.8, drg.7.18)

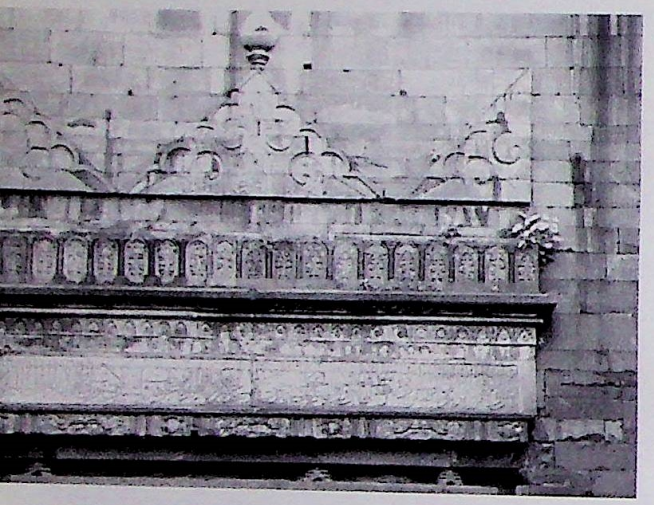

Fig. 7.27: Motif above the arch frame of the Principal *mihrab*, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

Fig. 7.28: Composite lintel above arch frame of the Principal *mihrab*, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

Arch frames

The frame of *mihrab* niche at the Adina mosque also is remarkable in low relief stone decoration and was copied in terracotta decoration in later period (fig.7.26). The frame consists of two narrow bands of the carved stones casing a recessed panel of vegetal decoration. Both narrow bands have patterns of rosettes set within circular and diamond shaped frames.

The portion above the arch frame is exquisitely decorated using the carved relief work on basalt stone in combination with a beautiful re-used doorjamb placed horizontally and forms a composite lintel (fig.7.28). There can be seen miniature temple models below the doorjamb. This doorjamb has exquisitely carved bow motif, which can be seen on all the mosques of later period and on the temple facades also. Above the doorjamb a panel of vegetal decoration follows a broad band of calligraphy within a plain frame. Then comes a row of arched niches with a lotus blossom in each miniature niche. After a projected moulding there is a row of niches with tree of life carved in between the niches. These small niches are seven-foiled and are placed in a pointed arched frame. The composition forming the frame of the principal *mihrab* of the mosque and the composite lintel above the frame was later translated in bricks and terracotta and remained in use during the Sultanate period.

Above this composite lintel there is a combination of three triangles creating a befitting top for the grand scheme below (fig.7.27). The central triangle takes the shape of a seven-foiled arch with carved patterns inside and the side triangles are like vertically split multi-foiled arches on both sides. This pattern with many foliations and variations can be seen on the spandrels of arches of the later period architecture. This pattern was found in the

[31] Bandyopadhyay, Sudipa. *Architectural Motifs on Eastern Art*, R. N. Bhattacharya, Kolkata, 2002.

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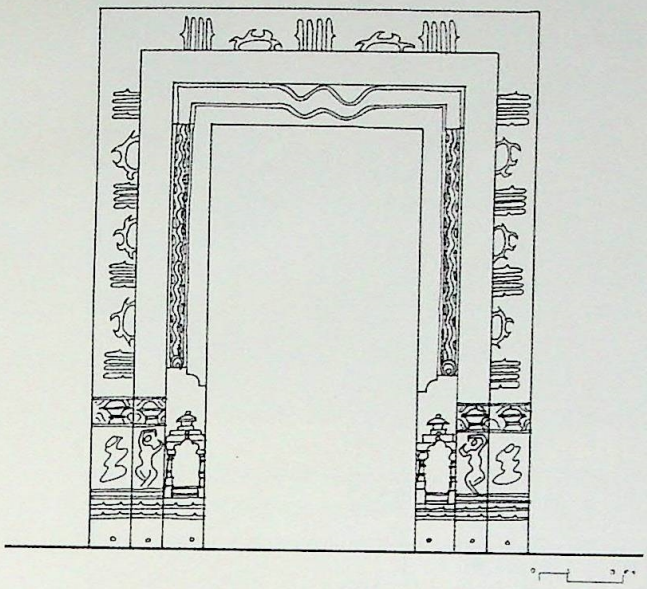
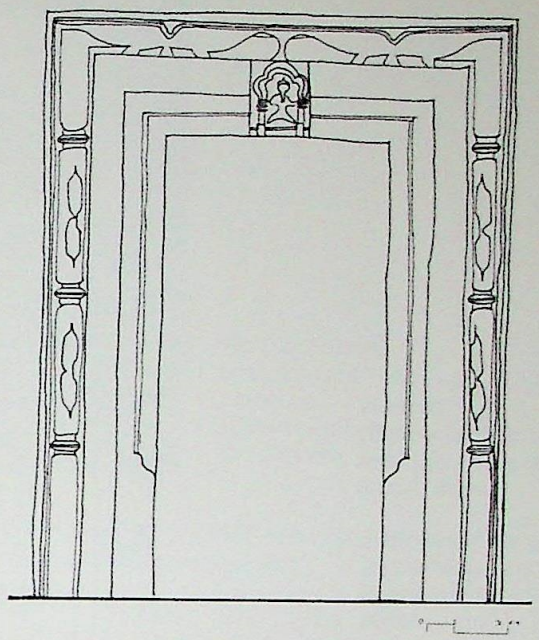
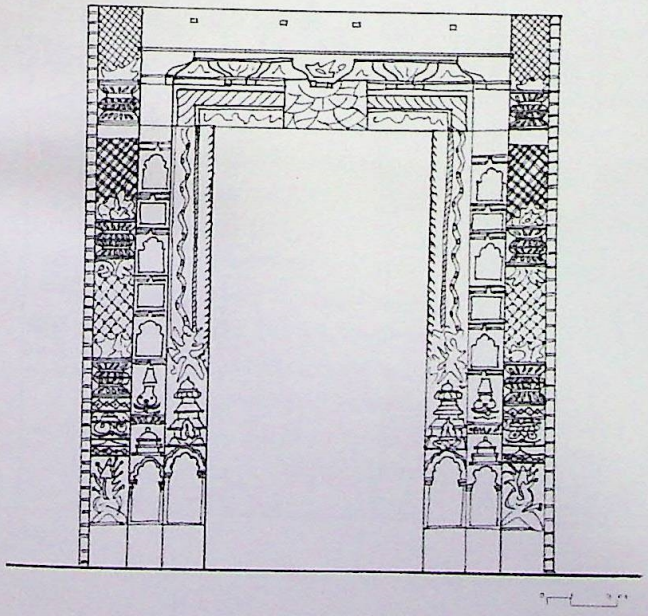


Drg. 7.13: Re-used Doorframe, Zafar Khan Ghazi tomb, Tribeni, Hooghly.

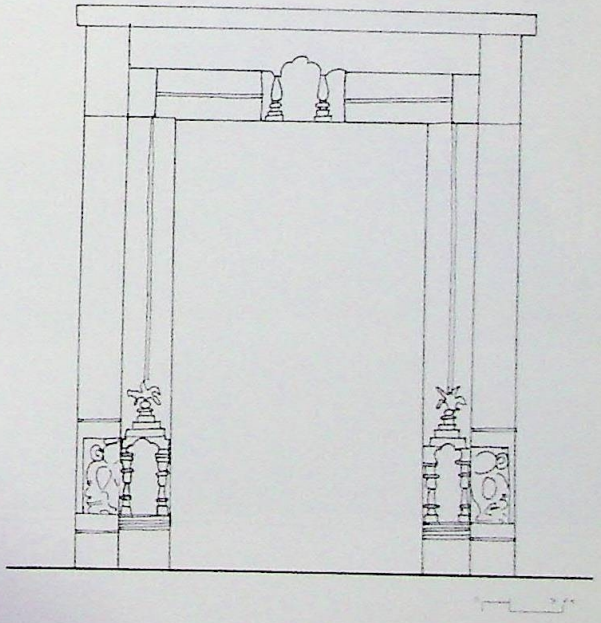


Drg. 7.14: Re-used simple Doorframe, West wall, Adina mosque, Pandua.

Drg. 7.15: Re-used ornate Doorframe, West wall, Adina mosque, Pandua.



Drg. 7.16: Re-used ornate Doorframe, Eklakhi tomb, Pandua.



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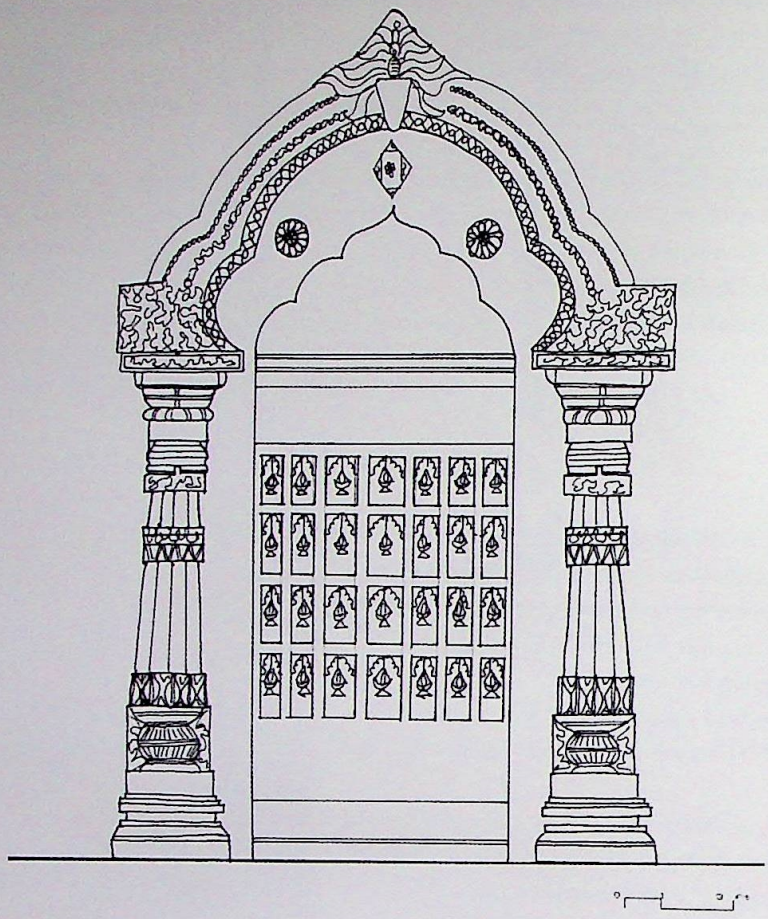
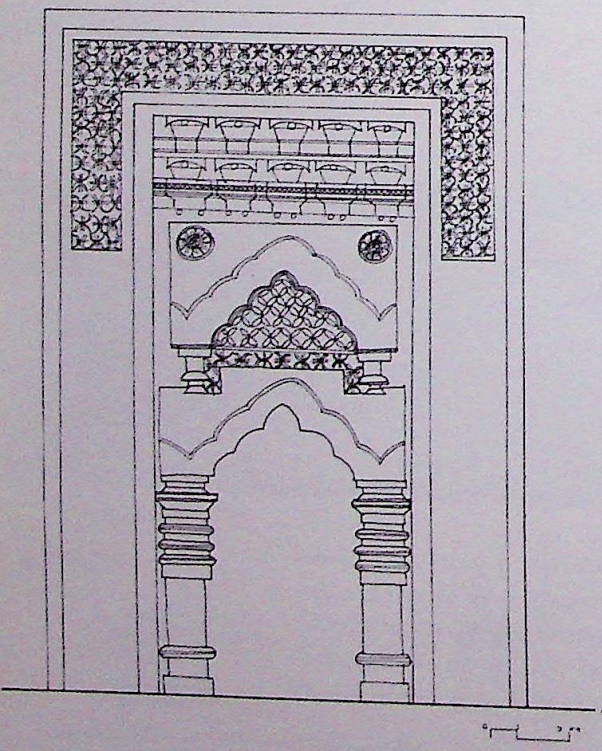


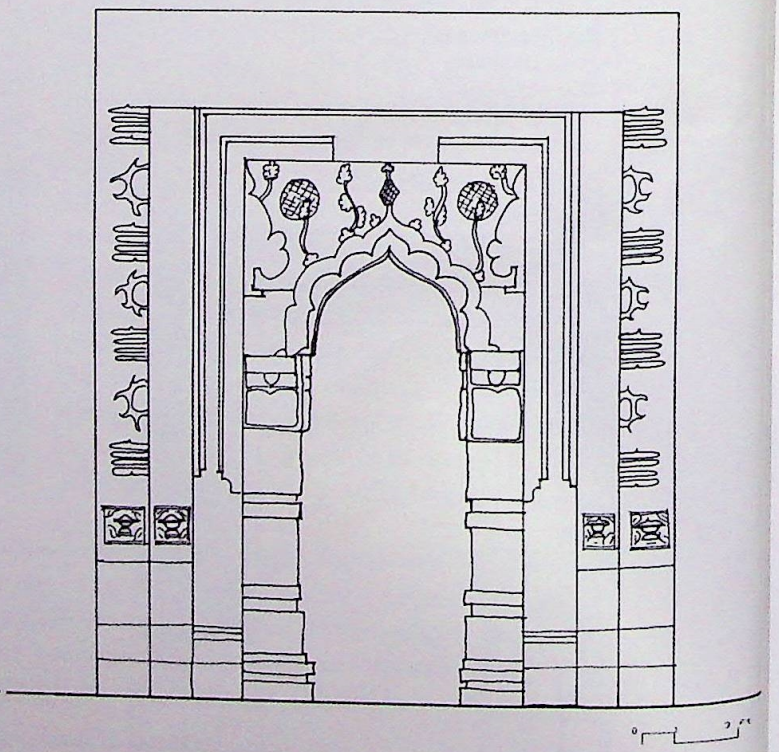
Clockwise

Drg.7.17: Principal Mihrab with a trefoil arch, Adina mosque, Pandua

Drg.7.18: Principal Mihrab framed in a re-used doorway, Zafar Khan's mosque, Tribeni.

Drg.7.19: Principal Mihrab with fine brickwork, Bari mosque, Chhota Pandua.





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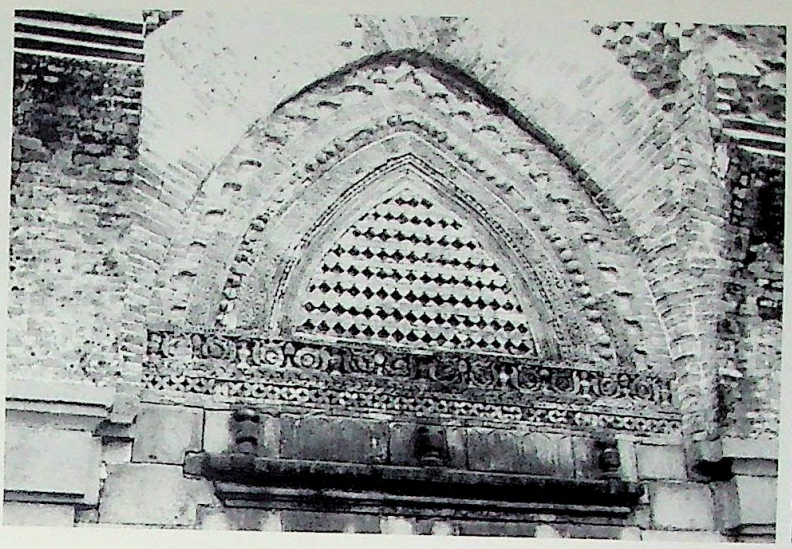


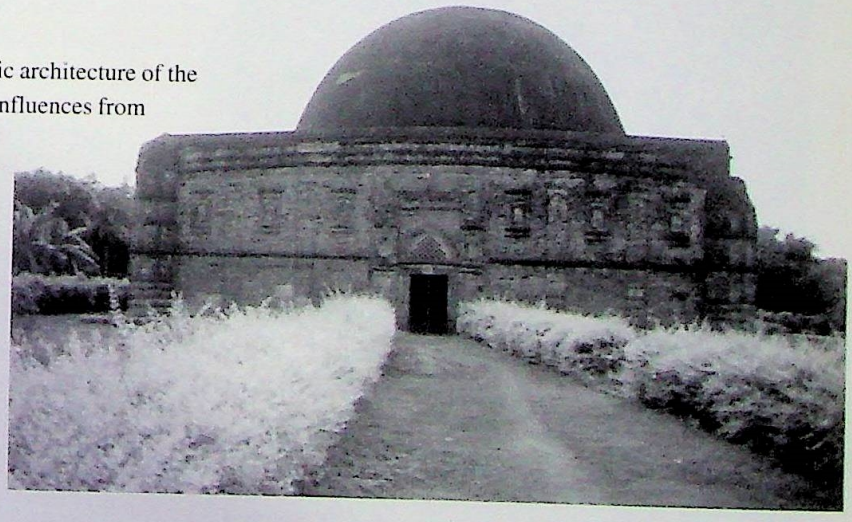
Fig. 7.29: Exquisite terracotta work on the tympanums, *Qibla* wall, Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, 1375 CE.

Tribeni mosque *mihrab* niche also (drg. 7.18) and since this *mihrab* niche re-used an earlier doorframe for framing the arched niche, the later period architecture uses similar arch frames and arch spandrels as seen in the Kusumba mosque, Rajshahi.

Tympanums

On the tympanums of the mihrab arches of the Adina mosque a great skill of terracotta art is displayed in twenty-eight floral and geometric patterns (fig.7.29). The main motif used in the central place is the hanging lamp but many hanging objects are used such as a group of three fruits, a rosette, a basket or a stalk with leaves. One tympanum has a tall tree with outspread branches and leaves, which fill the entire space. The idea may have been derived from the Indian conception of a *kalpa-taru* (a wish-fulfilling tree).[32] Another tympanum shows a series of outspread leaves as they go up - a motif obviously derived from the *chhatravali* (a succession of umbrellas) seen over Buddhist stupas and *chaityas*. The terracotta art seen here is a tradition revived by Muslims earlier seen in Mainamati, Mahasthan, Paharpur and Vikramshila monasteries executed in the 8th-9th centuries during early Pala period, however the patterns here are very refined and show the richness of the continuing tradition of which we have no earlier examples of the intervening period in north Bengal.

Fig. 7.30: Square, single dome tomb with curved cornice, Eklakhi Tomb, Hazrat Pandua, 1425 CE.



The above analysis shows that Islamic architecture of the period achieved greatness using the influences from Hindu traditions combining with Islamic principles. This combination is seen in the use of structural elements such as vaults, domes and arches for spanning and covering spaces. The fine terracotta art was revived and calligraphy on stone was introduced. The skilful use of the earlier remains developed an architectural vocabulary of base mouldings,

[32] Dani, 1961, p.69.

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left to right
Fig. 7.31: Detail of the base mouldings with terracotta panels.

Fig. 7.32: Wall treatment with alternating sunken panels, Eklakhi tomb, Pandua.

left to right
Fig. 7.33: Detail at the bottom of the post of re-used doorframe, Eklakhi tomb, Pandua.

Fig.7.34: Square, single dome administrative building with curved cornice, Chika Building, Gaur citadel, fifteenth century.

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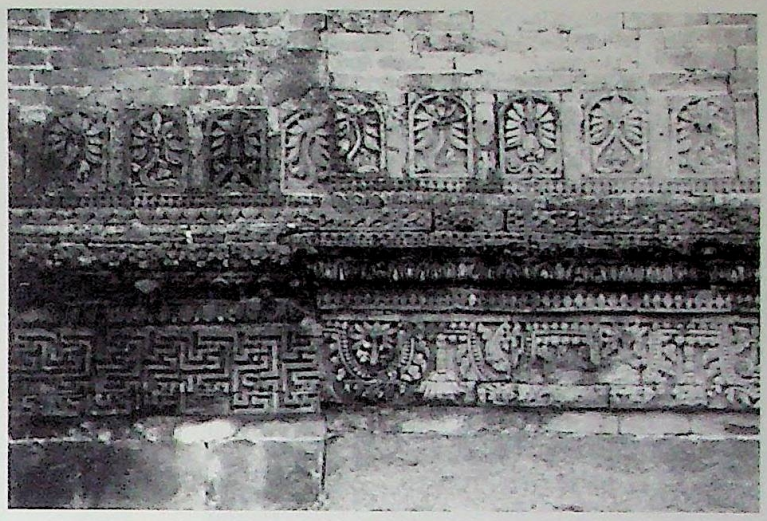


pillars, wall treatment, doorframes, arch-frames, niches, decorative patterns and structural systems to be followed by the later structures. In the following section, the ways in which this vocabulary further combined with the vernacular traditions to develop the mature phase of Islamic architecture in Bengal are discussed with examples.

Left to right
Fig.7.35: Detail of a pilastered niche on the front wall, Eklakhi Tomb, Hazrat Pandua, 1425 CE.

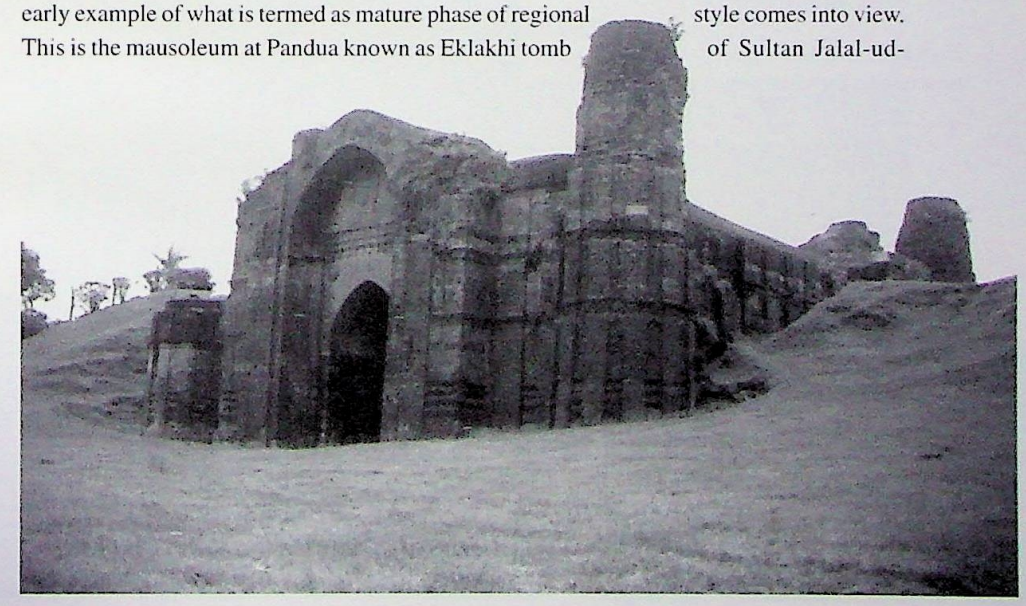
Fig.7.36: Detail of the terracotta panels in the middle cornice, Eklakhi Tomb, Hazrat Pandua, 1425 CE.

Below
Fig.7.37: The triumphal gateway, Dakhil Darwaja, Gaur citadel, Malda, late fifteenth century.

Mature Phase, (1415-1538 CE)

This phase prevailed during the fifteenth century from the rise of Raja Ganesh (1415 CE) till the end of Husain Shahi dynasty (1538 CE) and depicts the building art when it had adapted itself to indigenous conditions and yielded to its environment to develop into a regional style. In this phase we see buildings built in very fine brickwork and the re-use of the architectural parts of the earlier structures limited to stone doorframes and pillars. The vernacular traditions of Bengal hut building with thatch and bamboo affected the formal architecture of the period by giving it a most visible curve at the cornice. There were many structures built during this phase and a spurt in construction of square mosques was also seen. We may observe the characteristics of the phase using a few representative structures.

Eklakhi Tomb, Pandua, 1425 CE: (fig.7.30) In the beginning of the fifteenth century an early example of what is termed as mature phase of regional style comes into view. This is the mausoleum at Pandua known as Eklakhi tomb of Sultan Jalal-ud-



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din Mohammed Shah dating about 1425CE. This Sultan was the converted Muslim son of Raja Ganesh and this son of the Bengali soil might have been instrumental in introducing the vernacular character to an otherwise formal building. This single domed square tomb of remarkable architectural character with curved cornice became the prototype of most of the subsequent architecture in Bengal.

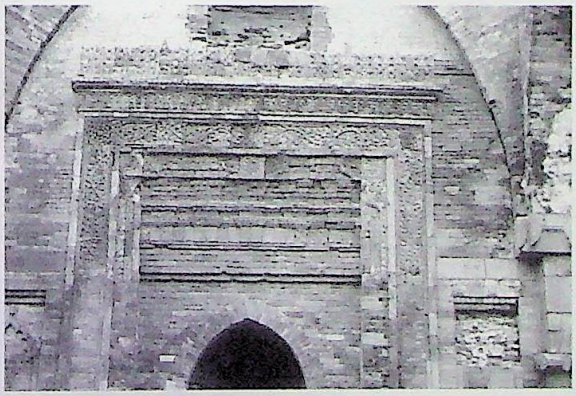
During the succeeding hundred years a large number of square mosques were erected in similar type.[33] One notable example was the Lattan's mosque at Gaur with single dome on a square plan approached by a three-arched porch also with curved cornice built in the late fifteenth century (fig.7.45).

Dakhil Darwaza, Gaur: (fig.7.37,7.40) One monument of the mature phase stands apart on account of its distinctive character and refined brickwork is Dakhil Darwaza. Built as a triumphal arch or saluting gateway, Dakhil Darwaza is believed to have been built by Barbak Shah in 1465 CE.[34] Measuring nearly 75 feet across its front and 113 feet from front to back, it is 60 feet in height, with an arched passage carried through its center. The massive structure of bricks has its bulk broken up by projections and recesses as used in the Adina mosque walls. The alteration of the surfaces of its facade by means of the turrets and bastions produces striking contrasts of light and shade, and these surfaces are enriched by ornamentation in terracotta panels framed in rectangles.

Tantipara Mosque, Gaur, late 15th century: (fig.7.41,7.44) During the mature phase of Sultanate architecture, mosques in Bengal were moderate structures modeled on the Eklakhi tomb plan. But for the larger mosques rectangular plan was also adopted with five or more openings usually with three aisles forming a covered hall of worship. One of the earliest mosques of this type is the Tantipara mosque at Gaur erected in the late fifteenth century. This structure shows great refinement in terracotta art and guided the best of the structures built in Bengal. Chhota Sona mosque at Gaur in Bangladesh territory is another rectangular mosque with *charchala* roof in the central bay built in the early sixteenth century. Gunmant mosque and Darasbari mosques at Gaur are also of the typical oblong plan.

Qadam Rasul, Gaur, 1530 CE: (fig.7.49) Almost at the end of the Sultanate period in 1530 CE, Qadam Rasul was constructed to house the representation of the Prophet's footprint by Sultan Nusrat Shah. This building is highly significant for this study as it

Fig.7.43: Detail of the terracotta panels on *Mihrab* arch, Tantipara Mosque, Gaur.
Fig.7.44: The terracotta panels on entrance arch and arch frame, Tantipara Mosque, Gaur.



[33] For a full list of the Sultanate period mosques divided according to the ground plan see Hasan, S. M. "Classification of mosques according to ground plan", *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris, 1984, pp. 141-154.
[34] Asher, 1984, p.70, mentions the controversy about this date and suggests a date of the early sixteenth century.

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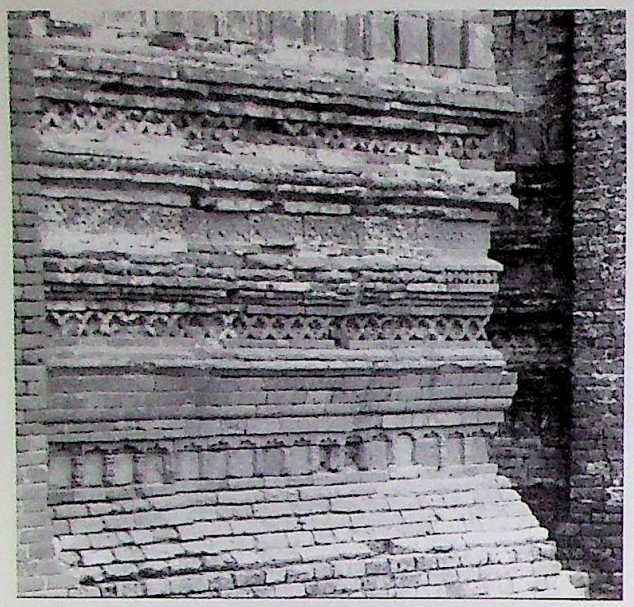
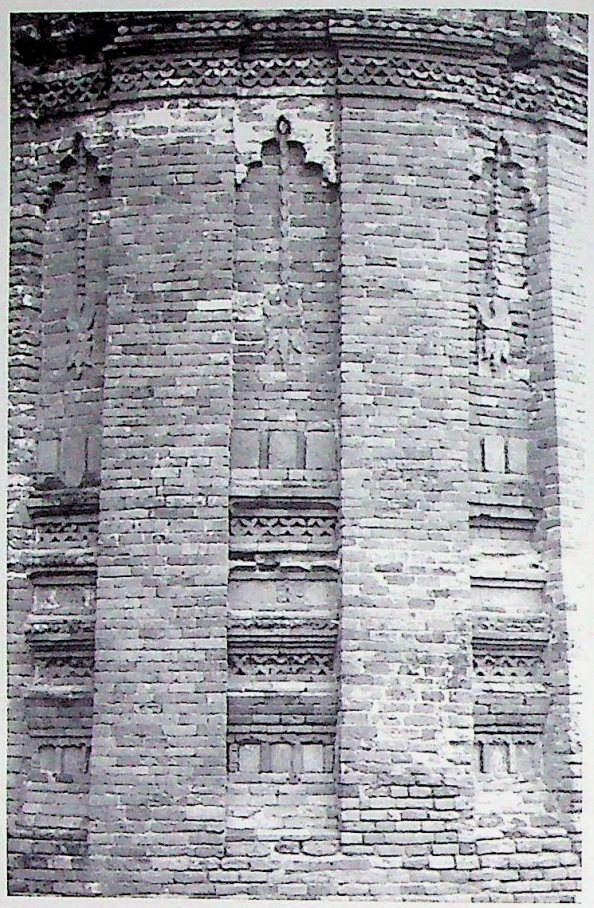




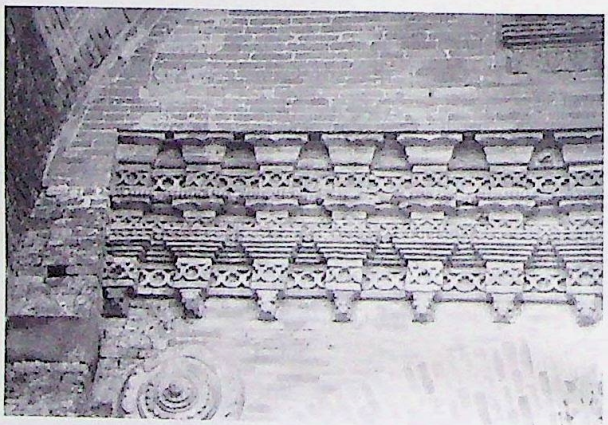
Clockwise from top
Fig.7.38: Base mouldings of the tower, Dakhil Darwaja, Gaur citadel.

Fig. 7.39: Wall treatment with panels, Dakhil Darwaja.

Fig.7.40: Detail of the arch frame mouldings with brackets, Dakhil Darwaja

Fig. 7.41: Tantipara mosque with oblong plan, Gaur, Malda, late fifteenth century.

Fig.7.42: Corner tower, Side elevation and Pillars, Tantipara Mosque.



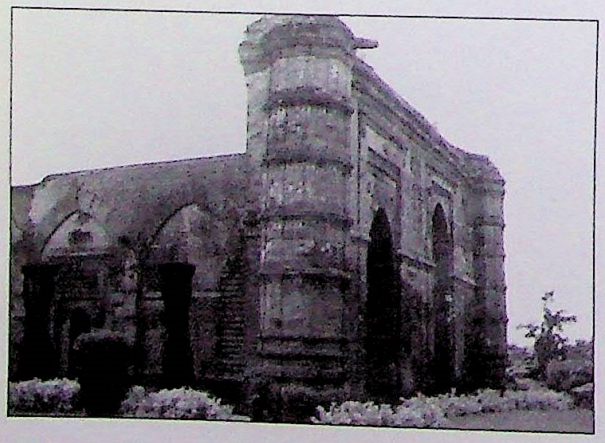


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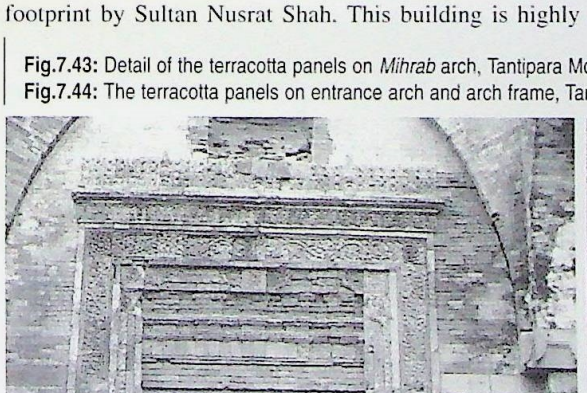
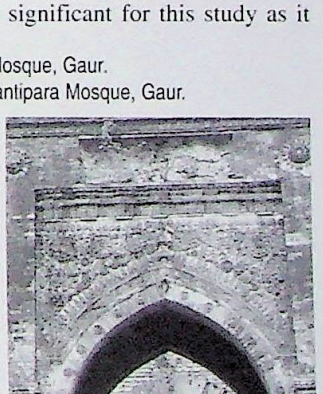
Fig.7.43: Detail of the terracotta panels on *Mihrab* arch, Tantipara Mosque, Gaur.
Fig.7.44: The terracotta panels on entrance arch and arch frame, Tantipara Mosque, Gaur.





[33] For a full list of the Sultanate period mosques divided according to the ground plan see Hasan, S. M. "Classification of mosques according to ground plan", *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris, 1984, pp. 141-154.
[34] Asher, 1984, p.70, mentions the controversy about this date and suggests a date of the early sixteenth century.

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Fig. 7.45: Single dome mosque with three-arched porch, Lattan's mosque, Gaur, late fifteenth century.

represents the link between Sultanate architecture and the architecture of the later brick temples in Eastern India as evident in its various features mentioned below.

The above mentioned structures are part of a phase of building in Bengal when largest number of mosques[35] and other Islamic structures were built and characteristic Bengali architecture reached its mature stage. Hence the following may said to be the characteristic features of Islamic architecture in Bengal. The noteworthy aspects here are the continuity of the style with the first stage of Islamic architecture and the role of the earlier stage in defining the characteristics of the mature phase. With following features, in some cases, their continuity in the later period (1550-1800 CE) is also indicated which is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Plan Forms

The use of the square plan in the Eklakhi tomb started an era of the use of square plans for mosques, which continued till the end of the Sultanate period. It was also used for any type of structures in Bengal and we see its use for administrative buildings such as Chika building and gateways such as Gumpti Darwaza at Gaur citadel. The Lattan's mosque at Gaur is a further development of this use as it shows addition of a three-bay verandah with central bay covered by the *charchala* roof with great effect. Unlike the octagonal plan of the Eklakhi tomb, the interior hall of the Lattan's mosque is square and squinches are used to convert square into octagon for the support of the dome above.

Perween Hasan[36] has attributed the use of square plans for mosques to the continuity of Buddhist tradition of square temples as may be seen on many Buddhist sites of the Pala period. It is noteworthy that the first square mausoleum built in bricks in eastern India, the tomb of Ibrahim Bayyu dated 1353 CE,[37] was located in Biharsharif, district Nalanda near Buddhist centers of Nalanda, Rajgriha and Odantpuri (Fig.2.4). The appearance of low and stunted dome of the Eklakhi tomb is also similar to the profile of any Buddhist stupa. The terracotta temples of Bengal built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries adopted the square plan for most of the structures (drg.8.1-8.5).

The oblong plan of the Tantipara mosque is the other popular plan of the mosques of this period. The use of covered prayer hall in square mosques like Lattan mosque and rectangular

[35] Eaton in *Islamic Heritage*, 1984, p. 28.

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mosques like Tantipara was necessitated very largely by the heavy, incessant and long rainy season. The rectangular plan of the Chhota Sona mosque at Gaur shows one innovation in the central bay, which is wider than the side bays. The central bay is covered by a series of three *charchala* vaults as described below. The rectangle plan of the Qadam Rasul building is formed by placing vaulted verandahs on three sides of the square chamber housing the relic. The plan of the Qadam Rasul at Gaur is the precursor of square plans formed by placing verandahs on four sides of a square chamber used for tombs such as tomb of Biwi Pari at Dhaka. The square plan with verandah on four sides was later adopted for the *ratna* type Hindu temples of the Mughal period.

Materials

The use of stone masonry is very rare during this period and the buildings were built by fine brickwork using stone only for tie-courses. The great heritage of terracotta art is displayed in the structures of this period. The art reaches its zenith on buildings like the Eklakhi tomb and the Tantipara mosque with many patterns seen earlier carved on stone being reproduced in exquisite terracotta relief carvings (fig.7.35, 7.43, 7.44)

One change noticed by the end of the fifteenth century was the use of glazed bricks on interior and exterior of the buildings, but the colour scheme and the glaze is not of the best quality as observed in north India (fig.7.47). This innovative practice introduced by Islamic builders was later discontinued in Islamic structures and was never adopted on the later brick temples of Bengal. The Qadam Rasul building uses fine brickwork for the main building but basalt for the pillars and the minarets on the top of the corner towers is used.

Construction

The most important innovation of structural systems in the early phase of Islamic architecture continued with ambitious structures. In the multi-domed mosques, the small domes were built of bricks supported on the brick pendentives as in the earlier phase. The forty-eight feet wide dome of the Eklakhi tomb sits directly on the octagonal base created by walls of the inner hall of the tomb. There are squinches, which transform octagon into circle at the

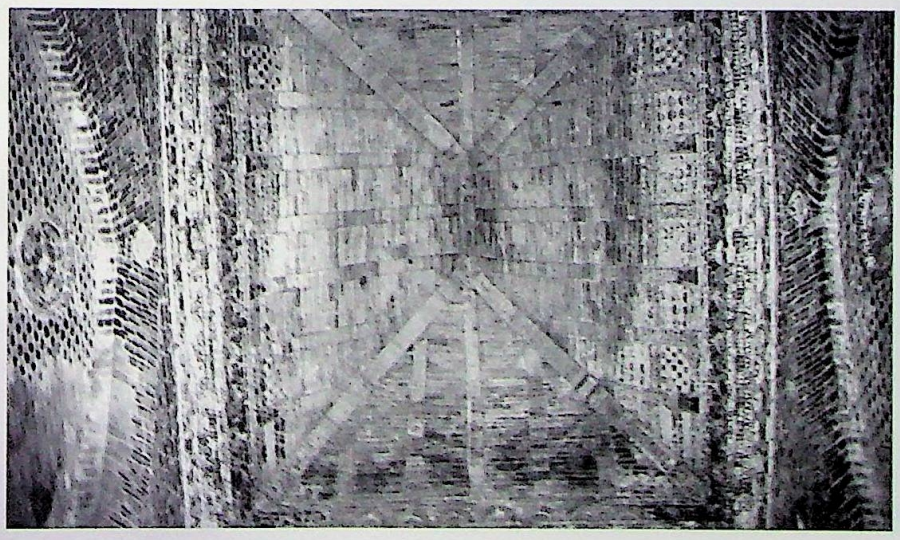

Fig. 7.46: Ceiling of *charchala vault*, ribs of bamboo joists shown in glazed tiles, Entrance porch, Lattan's mosque, Gaur.

[36] Hasan, Perween. "Sultanate Mosques and continuity in Bengal Architecture" *Muqarnas* 6 (1989), pp. 58-74.
[37] Asher, 1984, p. 113.

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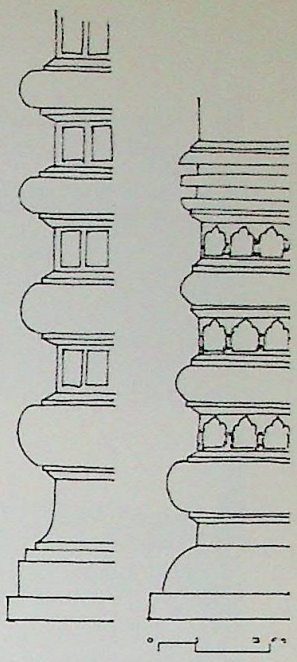
diamonds and rosettes, lotuses, series of niches as seen on the re-used parts of the Adina mosque. The top panel of this moulding has a tree of life or palm tree carved in a pointed arched frame. This set of mouldings inspired from the Adina mosque and earlier Hindu structures is used on all Islamic buildings throughout the Sultanate period in Bengal. If this set of mouldings was not found on the main body of the structure, it was present on the base of the corner towers as seen in the Tantipara mosque (drg.7.6, 7.7).

The base mouldings used in the last stages of the Sultanate period show some decoration by glazed bricks also as seen in the Lattan's mosque. In the Qadam Rasul a debased four-tier moulding is seen on the base of corner towers, and on the north and south faces interrupted with alternating flat panels. The later brick temples of Bengal do not use this great heritage of Indian architecture and follow the pattern seen on the front face of the Qadam Rasul structure.

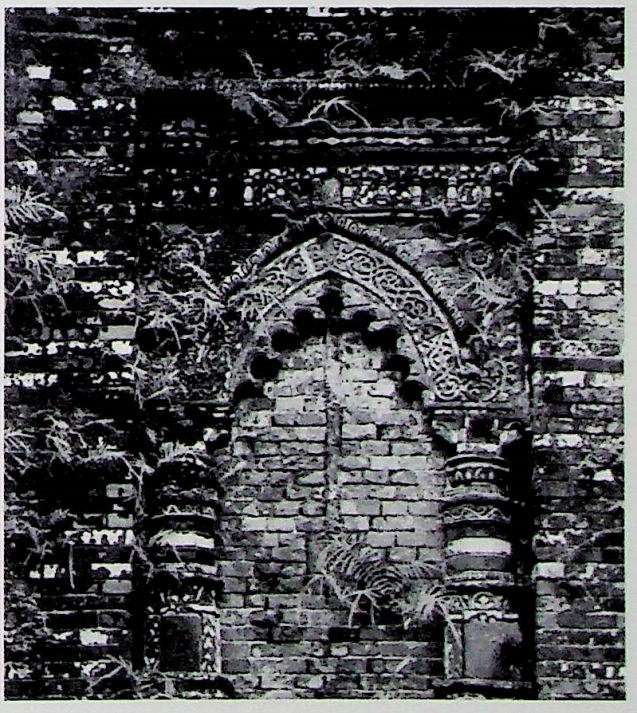


Drg. 7.6: Detail of the base mouldings, Tantipara mosque, Gaur, late fifteenth century.
Drg. 7.7: Detail of the base mouldings, Lattan's mosque, Gaur, late fifteenth century

Walls and wall treatment

The treatment of the straight surfaces of the walls of the Adina mosque has shown the method of wall treatment to all later buildings of the Sultanate period. The similar method of using flat panels to divide the surface in recessed and projected planes is used in the Eklakhi tomb. Here the sunken panels have base mouldings as described above and at the top of the panel an intricate object hangs from the centre of a nine lobed beautifully carved arch. Each flat panel, which is wider than the sunken panel, has a pilastered niche framed in a rectangle at the upper part (fig.7.32). This niche is also intricately carved and at the centre it has a hanging object. The whole facade is divided in two parts by a horizontal band in the middle giving it an appearance of a two-storied building similar to the west wall of the Adina mosque. The middle band consists of a set of cornices and rows of various terracotta tiles (fig.7.36). These have intricate patterns of palm trees, *swastika*, hanging lotus stalks, pearl garlands and many floral and vegetal foliations.

Fig. 7.48: Detail of a pilastered niche decorated with glazed tiles, Lattan's Mosque, Gaur.



A.H. Dani[39] and Percy Brown discuss the elevation treatment of the Eklakhi tomb with wood and wattle huts of rural Bengal but by the above description it is clear that the Eklakhi tomb has the elevation which was similar to the west wall of the Adina mosque. We have seen earlier that the wall treatment of the Adina mosque and the Tribeni tomb is done as per the continuity of the Pala traditions, hence may not be directly related with wood and wattle huts as mentioned by above scholars. However the similarity with the framing of wood and wattle huts may be seen in the small panels of the late mediaeval temples of Bengal and on the walls of the Qadam Rasul structure at Gaur. This structure uses the earlier kind of wall treatment on the north and south faces and represents the phase when this type of wall treatment was losing strength (fig.7.50, 7.51).

[38] Saraswati, 1941, p.27. mentions Darasbari mosque, Gaur also using similar *charchala* vaults.
[39] Dani, 1961, p.78 and Brown, 1956, p.38.

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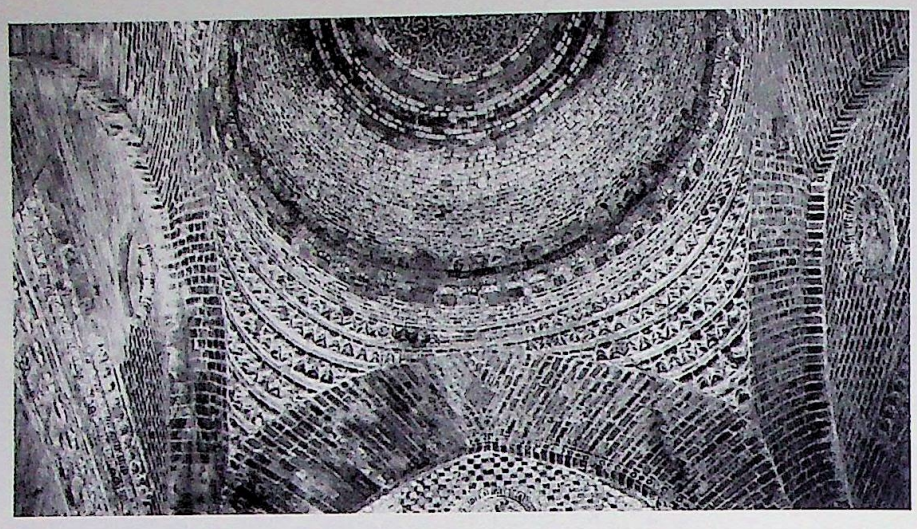
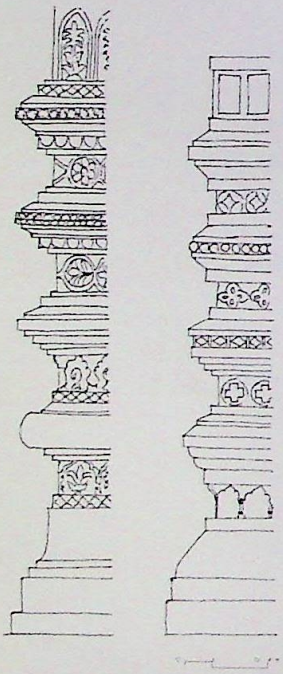


Fig. 7.47: Ceiling of small dome covered with glazed tiles, Lattan's mosque, Gaur, late fifteenth century.

base of the dome. Due to this method of dome building it appears low and stunted. For the construction of the dome of the prayer chamber in the Lattan's mosque, on top of the deep squinches and brick pendentives a drum is used, which is cylindrical from outside and in the shape of a flattened vault inside. This drum adds to the height of the dome and increases the dignity of the building. The small dome used in the Qadam Rasul follows the same system of the Lattan's mosque but do not gain the height and the elegance of that dome.



During this period small vaults are used to cover the bays and verandahs of the structures. In Lattan's mosque the central bay of the verandah is covered by a vault with four sloping sides called *charchala* roof in Bengal by the name of the *charchala* thatch hut built of bamboo frames. In fact the ceiling of the vault shows ribbing similar to the frames of the bamboo and on the exterior the eaves are curved resembling a rural hut and its thatch eaves (fig.7.46). A series of three such vaults cover the central bay of the Chhota Sona mosque.[38] The *charchala* vault used in the central bay of the verandah of Lattan's mosque became a common feature for such verandahs and was later used in the ceiling of the porches of the later brick temples. Three side verandahs around the Qadam Rasul shrine also have vaulted ceilings but flat on the top. This system of roofing was also used in the four side verandahs of Hindu temples of the *Ratna* type.

The most impressive structural achievement of the period is the long and wide brick vault of the Dakhil Darwaja at Gaur which is still intact. The pendentives, domes, arches and vaults mastered during the period are used throughout the history of architecture in Bengal.

Plinth and Base mouldings

Drg. 7.4: Detail of the base mouldings, Eklakhi Tomb, Hazrat Pandua, 1425 CE.

Drg. 7.5: Detail of the base mouldings, Dakhil Darwaja, Gaur citadel, late fifteenth century.

The higher plinth seen in the Tribeni tomb and the Adina mosque is not seen in the buildings of this phase. The plinth mouldings of stone used in earlier construction are translated in to brick and the decorative terracotta relief work on the tiers of the mouldings makes them outstanding. On the Eklakhi tomb and the Dakhil Darwaja these base mouldings run all around the structure being more exquisite on corner towers and interrupted by flat panels in a similar scheme as seen on the Adina mosque (fig.7.31, 7.38, drg.7.4, 7.5).

These base mouldings are five-tiered with lower two identifiable as *khura-kumbha* and *kalasha*. Between each round tier resembling *kalasha* there is a sunken panel of intricately executed terracotta relief work. These panels have usual decorative patterns such as

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diamonds and rosettes, lotuses, series of niches as seen on the re-used parts of the Adina mosque. The top panel of this moulding has a tree of life or palm tree carved in a pointed arched frame. This set of mouldings inspired from the Adina mosque and earlier Hindu structures is used on all Islamic buildings throughout the Sultanate period in Bengal. If this set of mouldings was not found on the main body of the structure, it was present on the base of the corner towers as seen in the Tantipara mosque (drg.7.6, 7.7).

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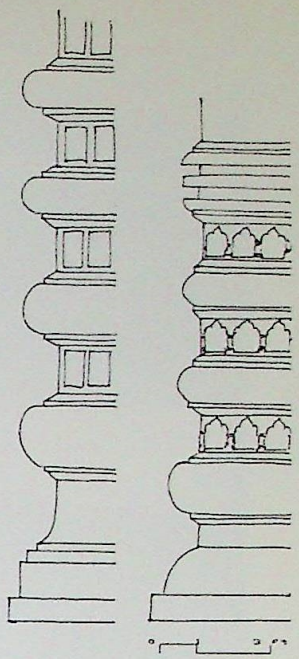

Drg. 7.6: Detail of the base mouldings, Tantipara mosque, Gaur, late fifteenth century.
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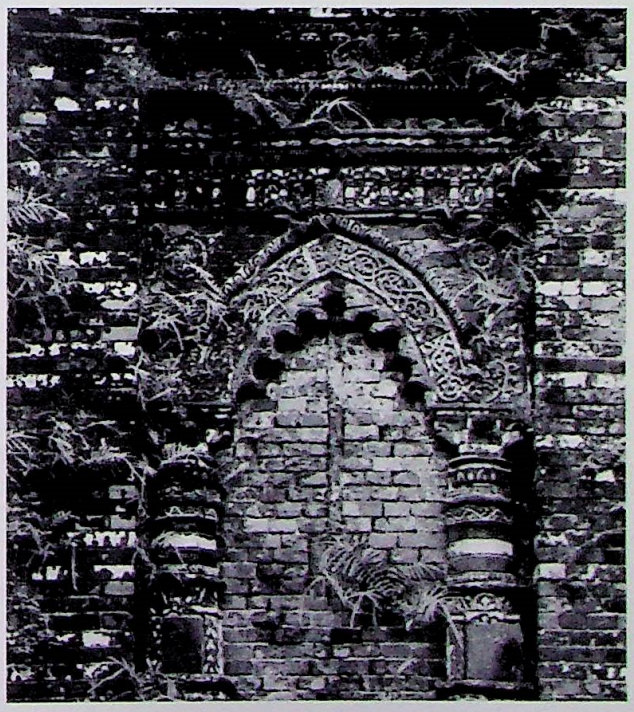
Fig. 7.48: Detail of a pilastered niche decorated with glazed tiles, Lattan's Mosque, Gaur.



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[38] Saraswati, 1941, p.27. mentions Darasbari mosque, Gaur also using similar *charchala* vaults.
[39] Dani, 1961, p.78 and Brown, 1956, p.38.

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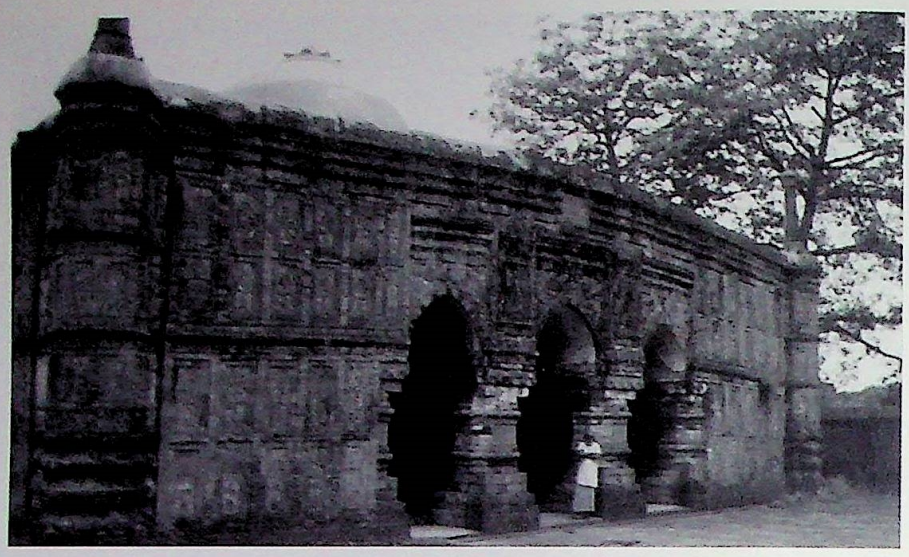

Fig. 7.49: Single dome shrine with three-arched porch,The Qadam Rasul, Gaur, 1530 CE

Curved Cornice

During this phase many indigenous influences entered into architecture and most notable was the characteristic curve of Bengal huts giving shape to the top cornice of all buildings. In the climate of Bengal it was necessary for the roofs to have a curve to throw off excess water. The easiest way to obtain such a curve in any structure was by means of bent bamboos covered with thatch. Thus a special form of curved roof was devised for the purpose and became in the course of time a fixed convention. Almost all buildings of whatever material display this feature. In the Eklakhi tomb the curved cornice of these huts translated into brick is used for the first time and throughout the Sultanate period this feature was used in all structures. After the Mughal occupation of Bengal, this important feature was not used in Islamic structures but invariably seen on the Hindu temples of all types.

The top curved cornice of the Eklakhi tomb also consists of three tiers of fine terracotta panels which continue on the corner octagonal towers also. The super-structure of the Dakhil Darwaza is fallen but the tapering corner towers might have been connected by a curved cornice on the sides.[40] The curved cornice of the Tantipara mosque, Lattan's mosque and of all other structures studied also runs around the structures passing over the corner towers and verandahs also.

Doorframes

The post and lintel doorways of stone frame the four openings of the Eklakhi tomb. These are re-used from the earlier structures as is evident from miniature temples seen at the bottom of posts (fig.7.33). Some doorjambs exquisitely carved with human figures and lotus patterns are used as horizontal members. This practice of re-use of earlier doorframes continued in the early fifteenth century only and we see such doorways used last in the Chika building at Gaur. After that the arched openings of the mosque and *mihrab* niches of all later Islamic structures have similar patterns as seen on the earlier doorways translated in terracotta carvings (fig. 7.43, 7.44). The most notable is the use of the bow motif on the frames of any openings (drg.8.6).

[40] Brown, 1956, plate XXIX.

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Pillars

There are no pillars used in the Eklakhi tomb but in the Dakhil Darwaja we see elegant pilasters of stone being used for supporting the arches. These pilasters are formed of basalt stone masonry and are devoid of any decoration. Multi-domed structures of this period have used stone pillars for dividing the space into aisles. In the Tantipara mosque well proportioned pillars and pilasters are used for supporting the arches. These are square at the base and the capital, and their shafts are octagonal with two horizontal carved bands modeled on the pillars of the earlier period (fig.7.42 and drg.7.11).

All pillars and pilasters used in the Tantipara mosque are of same shape and size with same decoration, hence seem to have been carved for the first use in this mosque unlike what is mentioned by Percy Brown and Satish Grover for all the structures of the Sultanate period.[41] Since the stone pillars used in the Islamic structures are essentially modeled on the pillars and pilasters of the Pala-Sena origin as seen on the surrounds of the *mihrab* niches of the Adina mosque at Pandua, the Bari mosque of Chhota Pandua, and the Bagha mosque of Rajshahi, hence, they appear to have been lifted from some earlier structures as wrongly mentioned by Brown and Grover.

Fig. 7.50: Wall treatment on side elevation and corner tower,The Qadam Rasul, Gaur, 1530 CE.

Fig. 7.51: Three-arched porch with heavy pillars, The Qadam Rasul, Gaur, 1530 CE.

The most important use of the pillars is seen on the Qadam Rasul structure. Here the masonry piers as seen in the Adina mosque and on the facade of the Tribeni mosque are used in combination with three arches (fig.7.51). The pillars are square at the base and the capital, with octagonal shaft of the same diameter as the sides of the square capital. Two horizontal carved bands divide the shaft in three parts. When seen from the front the column looks very heavy and straight but from an angle with cut corners of the octagon as shaft, the pillars look elegant in combination with the pointed arches. Here two half and two full pillars complete the composition, which became the most used facade for the porches and verandahs of the temples of the later period.

Arches

This phase shows the grandeur in the use of arches. The arched gateway joining the pylons of Dakhil Darwaja is an example of the finest execution of the Sultanate period (fig.7.37). In the four openings of the Eklakhi tomb, post and lintel stone doorways are used and above the lintel a pointed arch is introduced. As a whole it resembles the arch and beam combination of Firuzian buildings at Delhi. The 'drop arch' as seen on the Tribeni mosque is used in later buildings also and all the pointed arches used in the Tantipara mosque and the Qadam Rasul are also of this type.

The multi-foliated arch, which was used till the end of the fifteenth century on the *mihrab* niches and in low relief carving, now finds expression on the main facade in the Chhota Sona mosque at Gaur. These are not seen on many Islamic buildings but at three arched

[41] Brown, 1965, p.152 and Grover, S.*Architecture of India: Islamic (727-1707 AD).* Vikas, New Delhi, 1981, p.112.

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entrances of Hindu temples, these were frequently used in combination with the pillars as seen on the Qadam Rasul.

Corner towers

The addition of projecting corner towers in any type of Islamic structure in Bengal started with the Eklakhi tomb (fig.7.32). These towers or bastions are sometimes circular in plan but mostly these are octagonal in plan with five faces projecting out. In the Eklakhi tomb they were topped by rounded cupolas those do not exist any more but their shape may be assessed seeing the top of the corner towers of the later structures such as the Lattan's mosque. The bases of the towers are exquisitely decorated by base mouldings as described above. The surfaces of the tower are divided in flat and sunken panels, which have terracotta relief carvings.

The circular corner towers of the Dakhil Darwaja taper upwards and are decorated in the similar manner as of Eklakhi tomb (fig.7.39). The towers used in the Tantipara mosque are octagonal with five horizontal divisions (fig.7.42).

Fig. 7.52: Detail of terracotta panels on the front face, The Qadam Rasul, Gaur, 1530 CE.

A further innovation is done in the Qadam Rasul's octagonal tower built of bricks. Here above the flat cupola on the top of the tower, a black basalt minaret is placed (fig.7.50). This minaret appears similar to any free standing column tapering upwards crowned by a floral capital domed at top. Percy Brown believes that this feature was used on the corner towers of many other buildings as depicted by him in the drawing of the Chhota Sona mosque.[42] This feature of the projecting corner towers was started with the Sultanate period and is a typical Islamic feature. Its use was not continued in later Hindu temples but the *pancharatna* temples simulate the appearance of a square tomb or mosque with four corner towers.

Mihrab niches

The *mihrab* niches of the mosques of the period are brick-built pointed arches without any projecting surrounds as seen in Tantipara mosque (fig.7.43). Sometimes they used multifoliated arches supported on elegant pilasters such as in Bagha mosque of Rajshahi modeled on the image niches of the Hindu / Buddhist period. The concave interiors of the niches are decorated with terracotta relief carvings in the patterns similar to the *mihrab* niches of the Adina mosque.

Pilastered and arched niches

Pilastered and arched niches used on the walls of the structures of this period are very similar to the niches of the Adina mosque walls. On the walls of the Eklakhi tomb we see the use of a spindle shaped pilaster supporting multi-foliated arch. The entire niche, framed in an elegant composition of terracotta relief work, appears like a projecting window or *jharokha* of any temple or palace (fig.7.35). A similar niche is used on the top of the arched gateway of the Dakhil Darwaja probably meant to depict a *jharokha* above the gateway. The spindle shaped pilasters of these niches are probably inspired from the circular pilasters of the early Pala period seen on the Khari image niche housed in the Ashutosh

[42] Brown, 1956, plateXXIX between pages 38-39.

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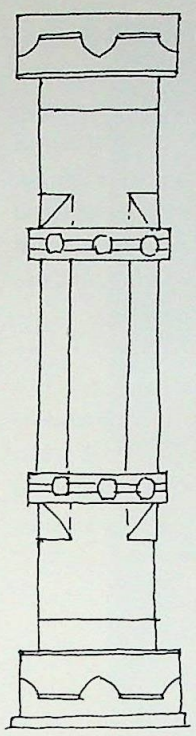

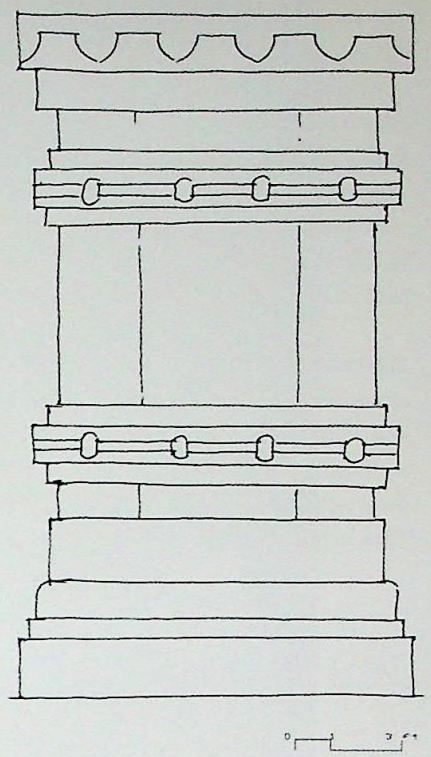

Drg. 7.11: Three part Pillar, Tantipara mosque, Gaur.
Drg. 7.12: Masonry pillar, Qadam Rasul, Gaur.

Museum, Kolkata. These elegant niches later became shallower as seen on the towers and pylons of the Dakhil Darwaja and on the walls of the Lattan's mosque and the Qadam Rasul structure where floral patterns are predominant and later used extensively on the walls o the Hindu temples built of bricks (fig.7.44, 7.48, 7.52).

Arch frames

The arches used on the facade of the structures or on the qibla wall of the mosques are framed in a rectangle which is always topped by projecting horizontal bands resembling the composite lintel used above the *mihrab* niche of the Adina mosque. When these arches are on the facades, the rectangular frames have small pilastered niches also within another rectangular frame as seen in the Eklakhi tomb at Pandua. All these features create places for the intricate relief work of terracotta. The motifs frequently used are rosettes, diamonds, scrolls, bow motifs and lotus patterns (fig.7.44).

One interesting band within the frame has projecting and recessing row of flat brackets in the shape of an inverted stepped pyramid, sometimes supporting one or more rows of similar brackets. This pattern is used on the Pala period *latina* temples of the Telkupi type at the base of the *shikhara* between two *varandika* mouldings, and can also be seen on many sculptures of the Pala period. This interesting band is used on all arch frames of the Islamic structures of this period but in the Dakhil Darwaza this band is very bold in three tiers and forms the main decorative feature above the arched opening of the gateway. (fig.7.40)

The triangular motif used on the top of the composite lintel above the *mihrab* niche of the Adina mosque appears on the spandrels of the arches of the mature phase in a modified form with foliated pattern (fig.7.44). These arch frames, spandrels and niches as described above find place on the facades of the later brick temples also where animated terracotta panels with definite iconographic scheme replace the geometrical patterns.

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The above analysis shows that Islamic architecture of the period achieved maturity using the architectural vocabulary developed in the earlier phase combined with vernacular traditions. The traits of the continuity in tradition could be observed in decorative elements, pillars, base mouldings, wall treatment and in the use of square plans. Islamic architecture further enriched itself from many indigenous influences and reached up to a mature phase, which may be termed regional style of architecture. The process of interaction continued even after the Mughal conquest of Bengal when we see a single hut type structure called *bangla* within the complex of the Qadam Rasul at Gaur used as the tomb of Fath Khan built in 1657 CE.

The builders of Islamic architecture have matured the modest building art of Bengal to a monumental art, with its sound construction principles, inventive and original appearances with traits of continuity, and suitability to the climate and to the purposes for which it was intended. Islamic builders were the successors of the famous eastern school of art, and their architecture displayed the continuity of the traditions present in the region since the Pala and Sena period.¶

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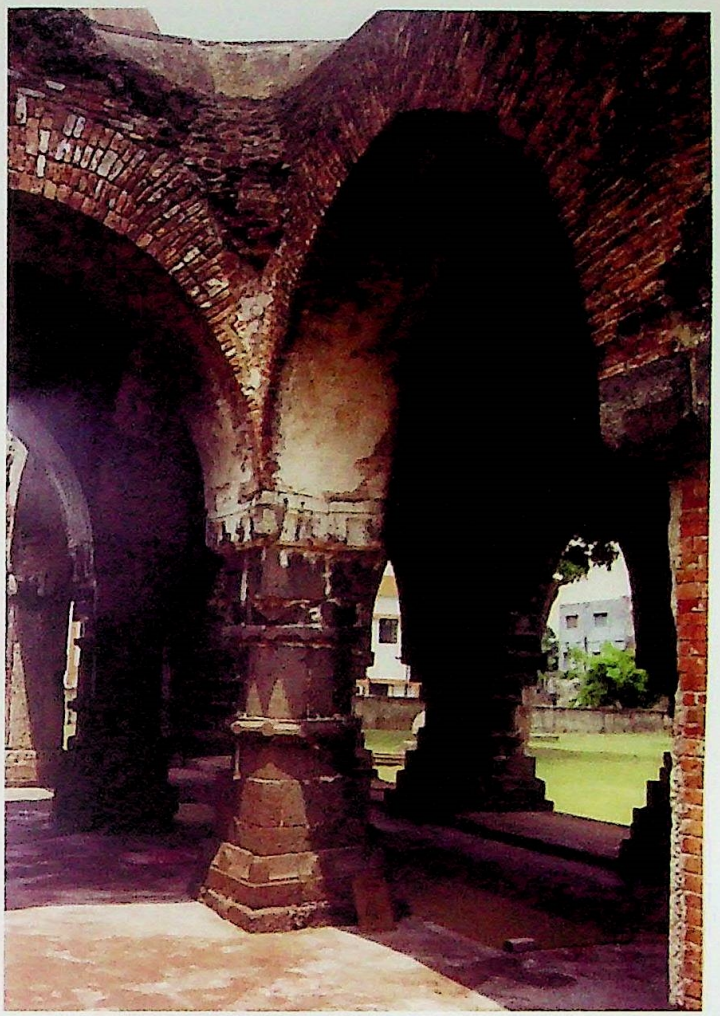

Zafar Khan Ghazi's Mosque, Tribeni

Kirtimukha Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua

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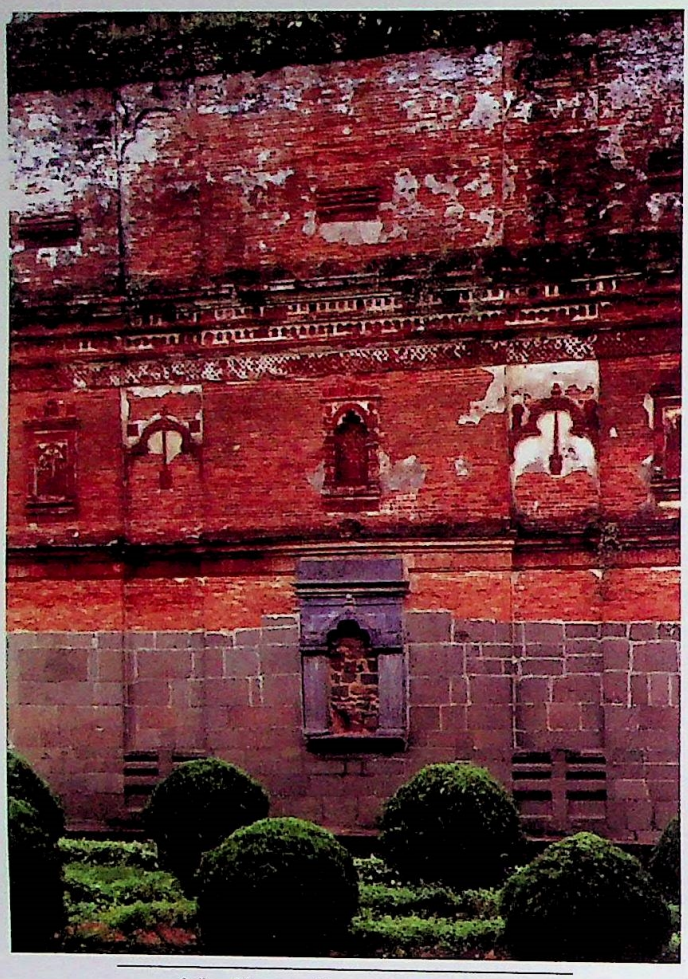

Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda

Adina Mosque, Hazrat Pandua, Malda

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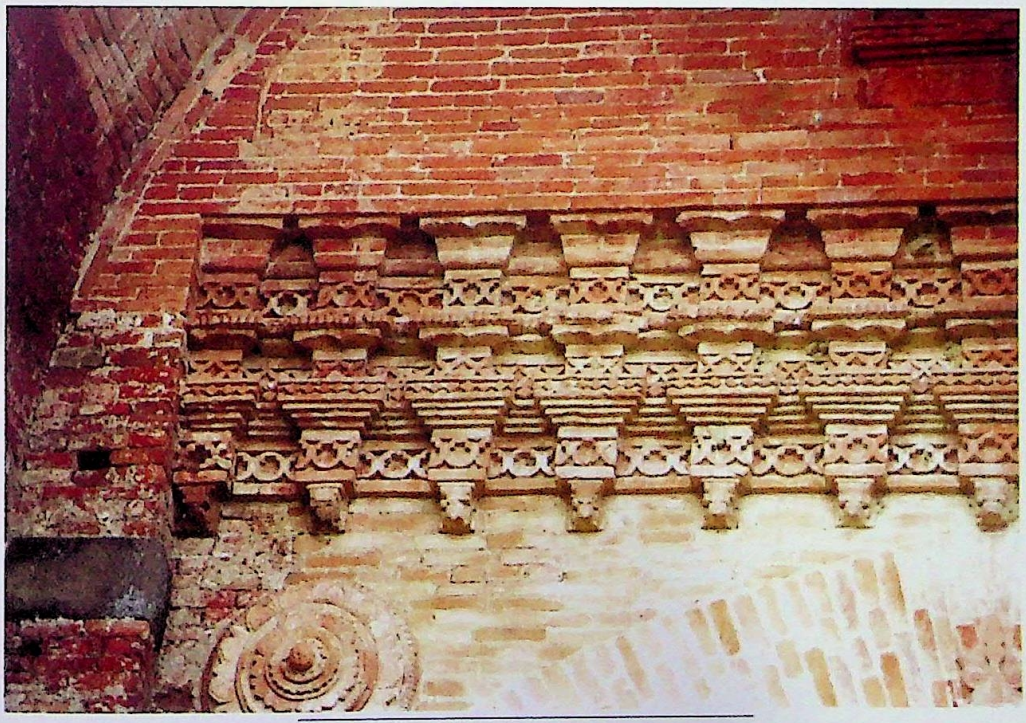
Detail of the base mouldings with terracotta panels, Eklakhi Tomb, Pandua



Arch frame mouldings with brackets, Dakhil Darwaja, Gaur

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Eklakhi Tomb, Hazrat Pandua

Tantipara mosque, Gaur, Malda

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Temple Architecture of Eastern India:

1500 - 1650 CE

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As discussed in chapters three to six, Bengal temple architecture progressed unaffected from the development in Islamic architecture up to the beginning of the sixteenth century. This development, however, was confined to the western parts of Bengal where Islamic influences were minimum. In the remaining parts of Bengal, temple building seems to have reduced so much in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that hardly there are any extant temples or their remains found. After the settled conditions during the Husain Shahi dynasty's rule in Bengal, temple building again revived with the support of Sultans and their officers in the late fifteenth century.

As observed earlier, the Eklakhi tomb built in 1425 CE started to use the curved cornice of the typical rural hut of Bengal and a tradition of the interaction of the vernacular forms with formal architecture started. Considering the large number of stone images recovered from the Pala-Sena period and comparatively little evidence of large temples from the pre-Islamic and early Sultanate periods, it seems quite likely that simple hut forms were used as temples and Muslims received the idea of introducing the curved cornice from those religious buildings. Consequently with Hindu revival and interaction with Islamic principles of architecture in the sixteenth century many temple forms inspired from thatch huts emerged in masonry, which are described below.

In the literature review of the subject, it was observed that the subject has received good attention of scholars after the pioneering works of McCutchion[1] and later extension of his works by Michell.[2] Some other scholars such as Sanyal,[3] Chakravarty,[4] Biswas[5] and Saraswati[6] have also made notable contributions. Here this study concerns itself more with the origin of the 'types' of the 'late mediaeval temples' the term given by McCutchion to the temples of Bengal built since 1500 CE. This study would also highlight the traits of the continuity in the temple tradition of Bengal and observe some patterns of disruption. Two very useful articles of McCutchion[7] and Sanyal[8] highlight the 'Hindu-Muslim artistic continuities', and describe that the mosques built in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth centuries freely used patterns of the temple decoration and motifs as found on the Atiya mosque built in 1609 CE in Tangail and Egarasindhur mosque built in 1652 CE, and the interaction continued bothways. This resulted into erection of unusual monumental structures with Islamic structural principles such as Rasamancha in Bishnupur built in the 16th century, *Navaratna* temple at Kantanagar in Bangladesh built in the 17th century and circular

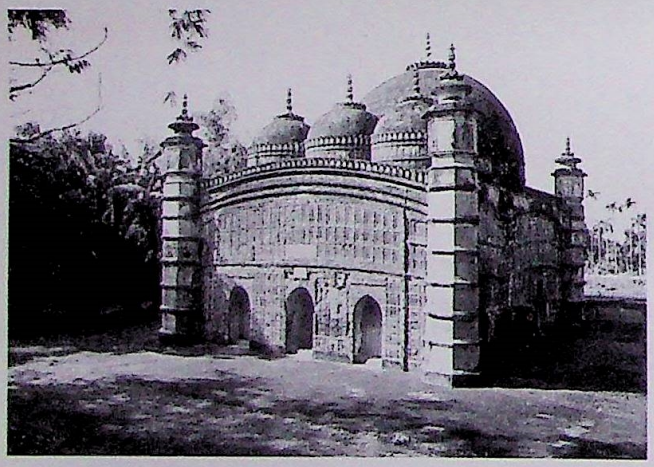

Fig. 8.1: Atiya Mosque, Tangail, Bangladesh. Square plan with porch, 17th century.

[1] McCutchion, David J. *Late Mediaeval Temples of Bengal- Origins and Classifications.* The Asiatic Society Monograph series, vol.xx, Calcutta, 1972.

[2] Michell, G, ed. *Brick Temples of Bengal (From the Archives of David McCutchion).* Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1983.

[3] Sanyal, H. "Religious Architecture in Bengal (15th-17th centuries), a study of the Major Trends" *Indian History Congress Proceedings*, 32nd session, vol.I 1970, pp. 415-17.

[4] Chakravarty, Manmohan. "Bengali Temples and Their General Characteristics." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 5:5 (1909), 141-151.

[5] Biswas, S.S., Haque Z. *Terracotta Temples of Bengal.* Calcutta, 1995.

[6] Saraswati, S. K. "Temples of Bengal." *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, 2:2 (1934), 130-140.

[7] McCutchion, David J. "Hindu-Muslim Artistic Continuities in Bengal." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan*, 13:3 (1968), pp.233-251.

[8] Sanyal, 1970.

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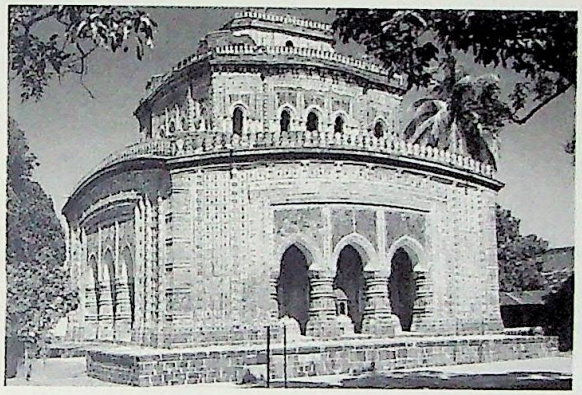

left to right
Fig. 8.2: Rasamancha Bishnupur Bankura, 16th century.

Fig. 8.3: *Navratna* temple at Kantanagar, Dinajpur, Bangladesh, 17th century.

Fig. 8.4: 108 Shiva temples in Kalna, Burdwan, *Atchala* placed in circles, 18th century.

disposition of 108 Shiva temples in Kalna built in the 18th century (fig.8.1-8.4). But in the later Mughal period, sub-Imperial architecture at Dhaka and Rajmahal[9] did not use the regional style of architecture as matured in the fifteenth century and the onus of patronage for the regional style rested with small Hindu kings and landholders who produced their moderate temples following the architecture of regional style.

Chala Temples

In the fifteenth century when the *latina* temples were experiencing some changes at Barakar and Gaurangpur in Burdwan, Pandra in Dhanbad, and Para in Purulia district, at that time, a few new forms were observed in the parts of south Bengal adjoining Orissa. In this region of Bengal where the *phamsana* mode was the popular mode of temple building, square temples with four sided sloping roofs emerged imitating the *phamsana* mode with the specific characteristics of the curved cornice as seen in the Eklakhi tomb of Pandua and used on Islamic structures since then. The sloping sides of the roof of a typical rural hut are called *chala* in Bengal and such roofs with four sides were called *charchala* (fig.8.5, 8.6). It was this form of temples which emerged first in the parts of Midnapore district built of brick masonry using the Islamic principles of vaulting and true dome. These *charchala* roofs were also found on Islamic structures for covering rectangular spaces almost at the same time in the late fifteenth century. In the Lattan's mosque and in the Chhota Sona mosque at Gaur, *charchala* roofs were used and their ceiling clearly depicted their origin from the bamboo huts as their frames were imitated in the brick vaults (fig.7.46). The Simhavahini temple at Ghatal, Midnapore is the first dated structure of the *charchala*

[9] Asher, Catherine B. "Mughal Sub-Imperial Patronage: The Architecture of Raja Mansingh", *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. Barbara Stoller Miller, Oxford University Press, N. Delhi, 1992, pp. 183-201. and also Asher, Catherine B. "The Mughal and post-Mughal periods", *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris, 1984, pp. 193-212.

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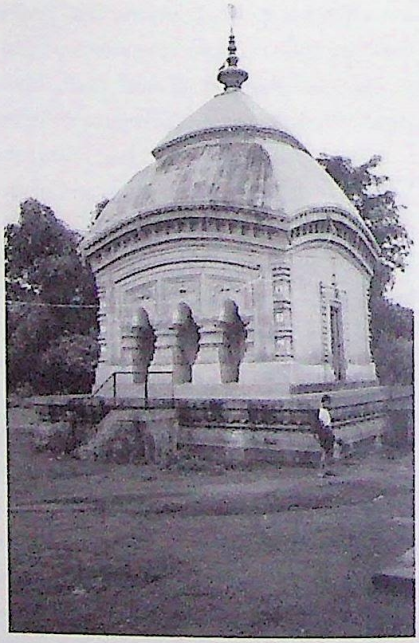
left to right
Fig.8.5: *Charchala* huts in Rural Bengal with curved cornice.

Fig.8.6: *Charchala* huts in Rural Bengal.

type which as per the inscription on the temple was built in 1490 CE*. In next hundred years, the *charchala* type of temples spread all over Bengal and from the McCutchion's list we get examples of the dated temples from all over Bengal. To quote from his list of the *charchala* temples - Gokarna in Murshidabad (1580 CE)[10], RayaNagar in Jessore (1588 CE), Bardhankuti in Rangpur (1601 CE) and in the early seventeenth century at Ghurisha in Birbhum (1633 CE)[11] (fig.8.7) are a few early examples.

If a miniature *charchala* was built on the top of a *charchala* structure, this would be called *at-chala* referring to the eight sloping sides. Here *at-chala* may be seen in a different way as earlier *at-chala* and *baro-chala* temples were almost the copies of the *phamsana* tiered roof with two or three tiers separated by a recess. It may also be recalled that majority of the *phamsana* temples in Bengal have two or three tiers only. The striking difference, however, is in the curved cornices of all these tiers. The origin of the *phamsana* shrine is explained from the thatched huts[12] and in the Bengal region where the *nagara* tradition weakened in



left to right
Fig. 8.7: Raghunath temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum, *Charchala*, single cell, 1633 CE.

Fig. 8.8: Radha Ballabh temple at Garhbeta, *Atchala*, early 17th century.

* Michell, 1983, p. 20. Michell mentions some doubts about the 1490CE inscription of the Ghatal temple and unlike McCutchion, he thinks it to be an 18th century monument. Considering the location, size, method of construction and decoration, this study agrees with the inscription on possibly restored temple and McCutchion's observation as the earliest surviving *chala* temple (McCutchion, 1972, p.10).

[10] Bhattacharyya, A. K. *A Corpus of Dedicatory Inscriptions from Temples of West Bengal (c. 1500 A.D. to c.1800 A.D.)*, Calcutta, 1982, no.7

[11] Ibid. no.16.

[12] may be seen in the writings of A.K. Coomaraswamy in Coomaraswamy, Ananda K.*Early Indian Architecture- Palaces*, Munshiram Manoharlal, N. Delhi, 1975. Republication of the work published in *Eastern Art*, Vol.III, 1931, p. 181-217. and Meister, Michael W. *The Language and Process of Early Indian Architecture*, California, May, 1991.

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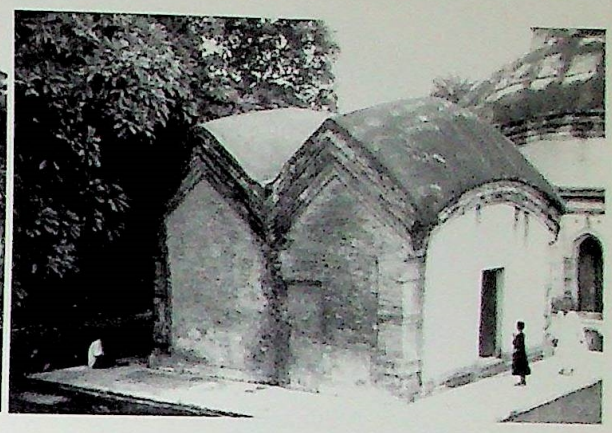

left to right
Fig. 8.9 : *Bangla* huts in Rural Bengal

Fig.8.10: Chaitanya Deva temple at Guptipara, Burdwan, *Jorbangla*, late 16th century.

the fifteenth century, it is the nature of Indian architecture that the temple forms were emerging with the interaction of the prevailing vernacular and Islamic influences.

In Radha Ballabh temple at Garhbeta (fig.8.8) in the near vicinity of the two important *phamsana* temples (the Kangareshwar Shiva and the Sarvamangala Devi) the similarity of the tiered *chala* roofs with *phamsana* mode can be well observed.

Bangla Temples

Once the vaulting principles were started to be used in imitation of the *charchala* hut roofs, the forms spread all over and then it was easier to imitate the more picturesque *bangla* roof in bricks. It evolved from the simplest form of rectangular hut which has a curved ridge, two sloping sides of the roof and gable ends (fig.8.9). This type of hut is called *eka-bangla* or *do-chala* in Bengal. Following the sound structural principles of vaulting this *eka bangla* form changed the landscape of Bengal. It became a favoured type for the subsidiary structures such as the entrance gateways, *naubat khanas*, *bhoga mandapa*, *natamandapas* and *rasamanchas* (fig.8.2). This form fascinated the Mughal governors Shahjahan and Raja Mansingh and went on to become important feature in Mughal architecture at their capitals. The *bangla* roof known in north India as the '*bangaldar* roof' became the inseparable element of Rajputana architecture, Sikh architecture and Awadh architecture in the eighteenth century.

The earliest temple structure of the *bangla* form is said to be the Chaitanyadeva temple at Guptipara, Burdwan built during the governorship of Raja Mansingh in the Mughal emperor Akbar's period (fig.8.10). It is a twin hut type structure called *jorbangla* in Bengal with one hut acting as porch. No extant examples of the *bangla* temples of *eka bangla* type survive from the study period but there must have been a few built in this type before the *jorbangla* form evolved. There are a few *latina* temples reported from Kharagpur, district Munger in Bihar which have porches in the shape of *eka bangla*. McCutchion[13] have quoted Adris Banerji's suggestion that these temples may be placed in the late sixteenth century i.e. contemporary to the Chaitanyadev temple, and, henceforth, the form found favour for the subsidiary structures. In whole of Bengal there are no more than twenty-five temples belonging to the *jorbangla* and the *ekabangla* types which are significantly less considering the innumerable *chala* and *ratna* types of temples. It is significant to note that the *bangla* roof is arguably the biggest contribution of Bengal to the Indian architecture.

[13] McCutchion, 1972, p. 7.

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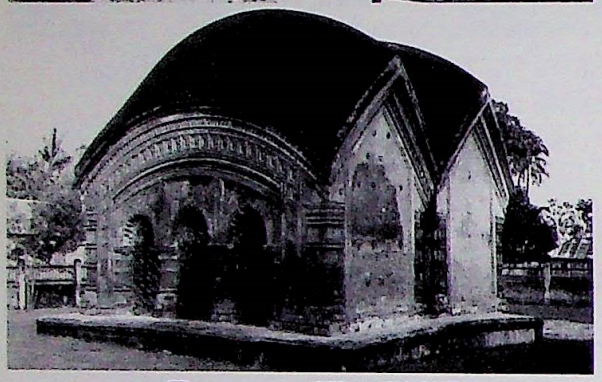

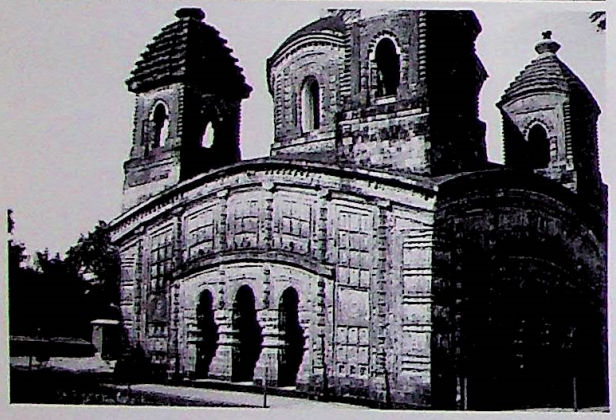

Fig.8.11: KeshtaRaya temple at Bishnupur, *Jorbangla*, early 17th century.

Fig.8.12: Krishna temple at Pabna, Bangladesh *Jorbangla*, 17th century.

Fig. 8.13: Shyam Raya temple, Bishnupur, *Pancharatna* type, 1643 CE.

Many innovations were made in the *jorbangla* type to use it as Shakti shrine, as a Shiva temple with three *Sivalingas* installed or for Krishna temple with a small square sanctum in the center such as in the Keshta Raya temple at Bishnupur and the Gopinath temple temple at Pabna, Bangladesh built in the middle of the seventeenth century[14] (fig.8.11,8.12). Here an interesting comparison with the *valabhi* temple mode of the *nagara* tradition and the *bangla* type may be drawn as both follow a rectangular plan covered by a vaulted roof. It seems the longer huts or *bangla* forms were started to be used for Shakti shrines in imitation of the *valabhi* temples present in Bengal (Sarvamangala temple of Garhbeta). The *jorbangla* plan also suited for the Shakti shrine evident in the fact that many of the surviving *jorbangla* temples are Shakti temples dedicated to the mother goddess today. The examples are Siddheshwari temple at Kalna, Dayamayi Mata temple at Saidabad in Murshidabad, Dakshinbazar temple at Chandrakona in Midnapore and Kali temple at Itanda, Bolpur in Birbhum.

Ratna temples

The *ratna* type of temples has similar lower structure as those of the *chala* temples with more or less flat roof following the curve of the curved cornices on all sides and surmounted by one or more towers resembling the *latina shikharas* or *latina* aedicules. The simplest form of the *ratna* temples has one such aedicule on the roof to which four more may be added at the corners calling the form as *pancharatna.*

The *Ratna* temples as described by McCutchion might have emerged in the 16th century but there are no extant examples of that period. It is important to note that the first *ratna* temples at Gokul Nagar (Gokul Chand, 1638 CE) and Bishnupur (Shyam Raya, 1643 CE fig.8.13) are the *pancharatna* and probably hints at their origin in the *panchayatana* temples seen in Bengal. While mentioning the excavated remains of the *panchaytana* temple at Wari in Malda district, McCutchion has quoted Debala Mitra's study of the inscription[15] from the site, which mentions the Wari temple to be the earliest *pancharatna* temple for which we have dated evidence in Bengal. This temple built in 1545-46 CE follows a typical *panchaytana* temple plan as seen in the *nagara* temples of Osia, Deogarh and other north Indian sites or at Bhubaneswar.

Debala Mitra[16] has mentioned the existence of a *panchaytana* shrine at Budhpur in Purulia district and also at Ambikanagar in Bankura district (fig. 4.29), the remains of which may

[14] Michell George "The Revival of Hindu Temple Architecture in Bengal in the late sixteenth Century", *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol 2, 1997, pp. 195-210. In this article, the date of the Gopinath temple is mentioned as 1607 CE which is not the same as mentioned by Alam, A.K.M. Shamsul. *An Album of Archaeological Relics in Bangladesh*. Govt. of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1984, p.74. This article mentions the name of the builder and his patron also.

[15] Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XXXV, p.179.

[16] Mitra, Debala. *Telkupi: A Submerged Temple Site in West Bengal*, Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India, No. 76. N. Delhi. 1969, p. 58.

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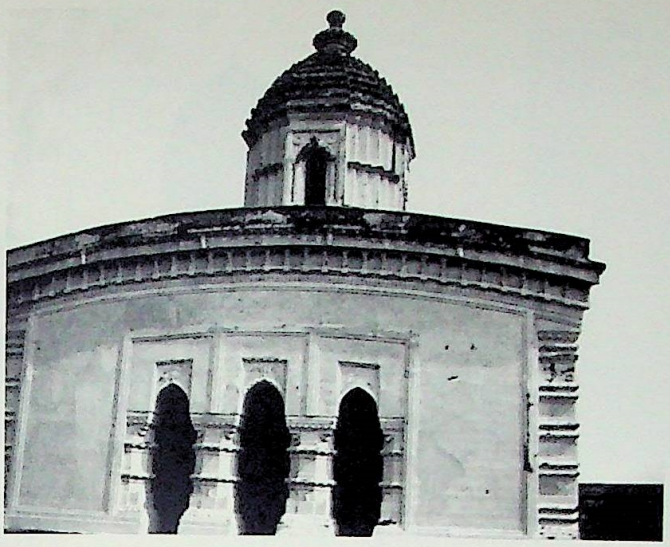

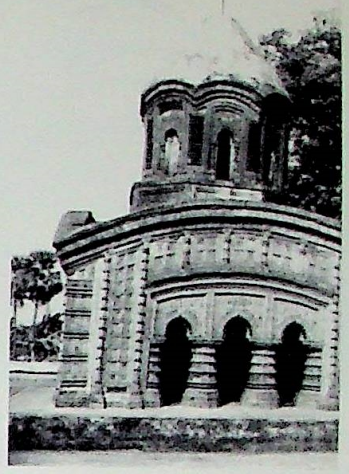

still be observed. In 1872, J.D. Beglar[17] has mentioned the existence of four subsidiary shrines at four corners of the Siddheshvara temple at Bahulara, Bankura. The Kichakeshwari temple at Khiching is also a *panchaytana* shrine. The reporting of so many *panchaytana* shrines of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the heart of Bengal amply suggests the origin of *pancharatna* temples within Bengal. McCutchion[18] has termed this arrangement of the later *pancharatna* temples as natural disposition of the human sense of order and mentions this to be a common Islamic practice of placing pavilions at the corners of the various levels. He gives the example of the Tajmahal and some later structures of Shahjahan's period in the Mughal capitals as *pancharatna*.

left to right
Fig. 8.14: Lalji temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, *Ekaratna* type in Stone, 17th century.

Fig. 8.15: Vasudeva temple, Bansberia, Hooghly, *Ekaratna* with octagonal *ratna*, 17th century.

It seems during the fifteenth century, Budhpur, Bahulara and Wari plan was quite popular and the nature elements required covering around the main shrine. Since the vaulting by bricks provided a ready answer to the problem, hence the earlier *panchaytana* temples emerged with covered circum-ambulatory passage around the main shrine and then at upper level simple *latina* aedicules were placed to top the subsidiary shrines on the corners resulting into emergence of *pancharatna*[19] temples. As regarding the origin of the *eka ratna* shrines; in the sixteenth century the Krishna-*Bhakti* traditions made the requirement of the four corner shrines, generally used in the Shiva shrines, obsolete and that resulted in to the emergence of the *eka-ratna* temples with covered verandahs all around the central *latina* shrine with no *ratna* aedicules to top the corner shrines. Later the *ratna* aedicules emerged on the roof of the Krishna temples also but as corner pavilions only for aesthetic purposes.

The origin of the *eka-ratna* temples may also be explained as a simple *latina* temple provided with a covered verandah all around. The three-arched porch present on the all sides of the *eka-ratna* temples of Bishnupur supports both the above assumption (fig. 8.14-8.17). At the same time the typical *latina* temples are seen in Bengal with circum-ambulatory passage from all different periods. An example of the fourteenth century is reported from near Balihati in Midnapore.[20] Kalanjaya Siva at Patrasayer in Bankura and Kanakeshvara Siva at Arambagh, in Hooghly are the eighteenth century examples, while scores of examples are observed from the nineteenth century.

[17] Beglar, J. D. and Cunningham, A. *Report of a Tour through the Bengal Provinces, Archaeological Survey of India,* volume 8, Calcutta.1878 and Reprint New Delhi. 2000, p. 202-03.
[18] McCutchion, 1968, p.235.
[19] Wari temple might have been a Shiva temple as suggested with location of corner shrines
[20] McCutchion, 1972, p.7

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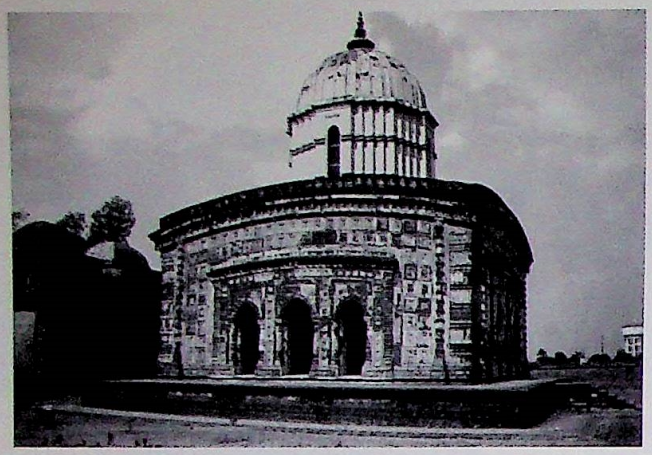

Fig. 8.16: NandaLala temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, *Ekaratna* type in brick, 17th century.

Fig. 8.17: Radha Shyam temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, *Ekaratna* type in Stone, 17th century.

From the above introduction it is amply clear that the late medieval temples in Bengal characterized by the *Chala, Ratna* and *Bangla* types emerged from the close interaction of the earlier temple traditions with the vernacular and Islamic building traditions. The following study of the characteristic features of these temples would further clarify the traits of the continuity and some new indigenous features and elements introduced during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Plans

The temples that were built in the sixteenth century followed long established tradition of square plans in Bengal. Perween Hasan[21] and Saraswati[22] have noted the use of Square plan in Islamic mosques as the continuity of the Buddhist tradition of square *viharas, chaityas* and *stupas* but they have not mentioned about the subsequent use of similar plans by the late mediaeval temples.

The sixteenth century *chala* temples were mainly square plan, single cell structures (drg.8.1). In the Singhavahini temple of Ghatal two square *charchala* structures are used to form a porch and a sanctum. Later the *charchala* temples of all periods and all sizes use only the square plans. Large *atchala* structures added a porch later, which was within the square plan (drg.8.2). It is interesting to observe that the two *bangla* forms were combined to make a square resulting into a *jorbangla* form. In the *jorbangla* form, one rectangle became sanctum and the other porch for the temple but this type also tried to use the sanctum at the center surrounded by the porches. The *jorbangla* temple of Keshtaraya at Bishnupur uses a square plan for the temple with a sanctum located in the center and topped by a *charchala* tower (drg.8.3).

In Baidyapur *deul* of 1598 CE[23], the need of a porch is underlined when a ridged *latina* temple of square plan used another such tower for the porch. Probably this form restricted the circumambulation and the square plan was again adopted for the *latina* temples with covered porches on four sides. In the *ratna* temples the square sanctum in the center was topped by a *latina* superstructure and they never deviated from the square plan (drg.8.4, 8.5). About the typical plan of the *ratna* temples, Klaus Fischer[24] has mentioned that

[21] Hasan, Perween. "Sultanate Mosques and continuity in Bengal Architecture" *Muqarnas* 6 (1989), pp. 58-74.
[22] Saraswati, 1934, p. 132.
[23] Bhattacharyya, 1982, no.6.
[24] Fischer, K. "Bengal Brick Temples: Thoughts on Early Near-Eastern and Medieval Hindu Traditions during the Indo-Islamic Period." *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture: Papers Presented at a Seminar Held in Varanasi in 1967.* Edited by P. Chandra. Varanasi, 1975, pp. 179-196.

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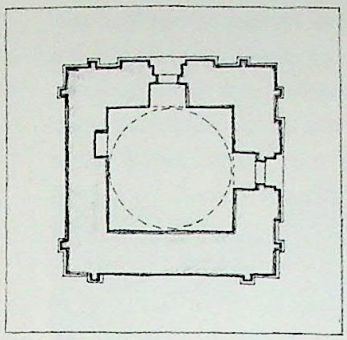

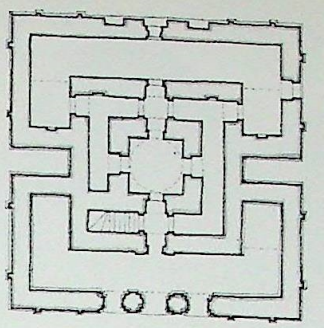

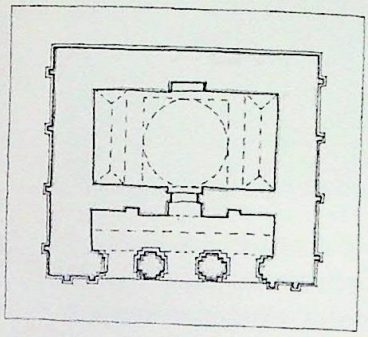

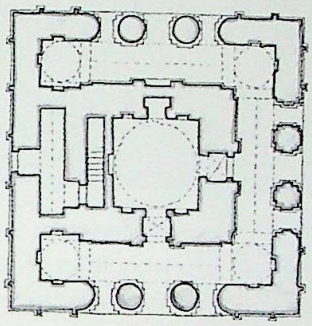

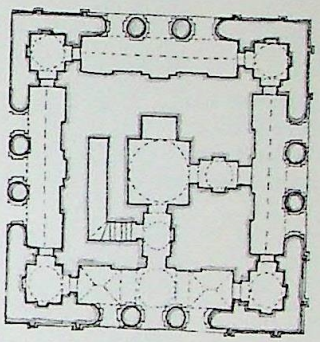

Drg. 8.1: Plan, *Charchala* Raghunath temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum, 1633 CE.(After Michell, 1983)
Drg. 8.2: Plan, *Atchala*, Ananta Vasudev temple, Kalna, Burdwan. (After Michell, 1983)

Drg. 8.3: Plan, Jorbangla, Keshtaraya temple at Bishnupur, 17th century. (After Michell, 1983)
Drg. 8.4: Plan, Ekaratna, Vasudeva temple at Bansberia, Hooghly 17th century. (After Michell, 1983)

Drg. 8.5: Plan, Pancharatna, Shyamraya temple at Bishnupur, 17th century. (After Michell, 1983)

comparison may be drawn through centuries of Islamic practice to the late Sasanian period. But a model could be seen in Bengal villages where huts are built with a verandah at the front and sides. This model was used for the shrines of thatch and mud and later in the masonry structures vaulting and domes were introduced for roofing with the introduction of Islamic practices.

With the above description it may be observed that Hasan's and Saraswati's observation about the Sultanate mosques showing the continuity from the Buddhist tradition holds true in the late mediaeval period also.

Materials

The temple building activity during the late fifteenth and the sixteenth century gained momentum in the geographical region where stone was rare to find and brick was the main construction material. The early brick temples of Bengal were built on the laterite stone platforms and used cut bricks for decoration. The temples such as Baidyapur *Deul* built in 1598 CE form horizontal ridges of the cut bricks (fig.8.18). In parts, this temple uses terracotta panels of the like used on the base mouldings of the Eklakhi tomb at Pandua and the Dakhil Darwaza at Gaur.

The temples of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century started a phase of the construction of the brick temples profusely decorated with terracotta panels (fig. 8.19, 20,

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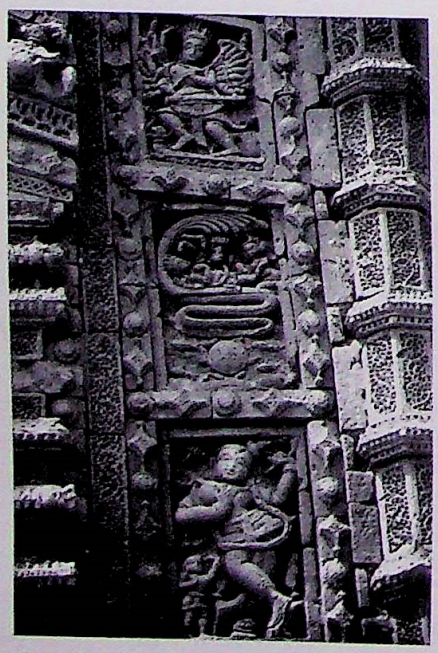
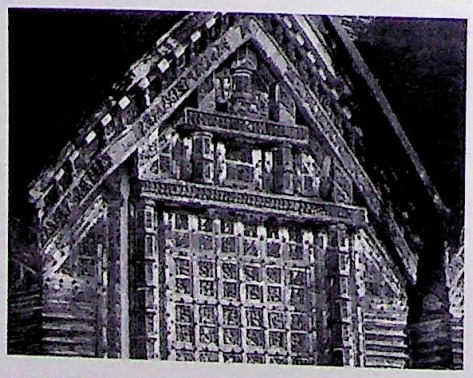
Fig. 8.18: Horizontal ridges of the cut bricks, Baidyapur *Deul*, Burdwan 1598 CE.

21). It was observed in chapter seven that terracotta art was revived in the late fourteenth century by Muslims and used with great effect on the tympanums of the arches of the Adina mosque[25] and later all through the fifteenth century on various Islamic structures. It must be noted here that it was the Muslims who introduced the smaller bricks in Bengal and initiated the finely chiseled work which was not found on the terracotta panels of the Paharpur and Vikramshila monasteries of the Pala period. Islamic builders imitated the earlier patterns carved in stone and also introduced a great variety of strip motifs. The brick-built temples of the late mediaeval period in Bengal used such terracotta panels with finely chiseled work.

A few temples of the period were also built by the laterite stone but these were confined to some pockets such as in Bishnupur where the laterite stone (called *'phul patthar'* in Bengal) is available (fig.8.14). These stone temples were decorated by stuccowork decoration which





Clockwise

Fig. 8.19: Terracotta panels depicting episodes of Krishna's life, Raghunath temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum, 1633 CE.

Fig. 8.20: Terracotta panels depicting social life, Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur, 17th century.

Fig. 8.21: Terracotta panels reflecting parts of timber architecture,Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur, 17th century.

[25] Dani, A. H. *Muslim Architecture in Bengal.* Asiatic Society of Pakistan Publication no.7, Dacca, 1961, p.69.

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was traditionally used for decoration on the brick temples since the Gupta period. One significant omission on any late medieval temples is the use of the glazed tiles, which were so frequently used on the Islamic structures of the Sultanate period in the late fifteenth century.

Construction

The use of brick as main building material for these temples facilitated the use of vernacular hut forms in the formal architecture. The builders of Bengal now had enough experience in the use of brick to form true domes, vaults and arches with lime mortar and finer bricks and this experience was used to form the *chala* and *bangla* roofs. Sweeping vaults were used to form the *ekabangla* roofs. The origin of these roofs from bamboo hut forms was ably displayed by the use of ribbed vaults in imitation of bamboo framing in the ceiling. Domes on the square structures of the *chala* temples were built using the true arch principles and, sometimes cross vaults were also used in these temples (drg.8.1). In a typical *ratna* temple such as Vasudeva temple at Bansberia and the *pancharatna* temple of Shyamraya at Bishnupur the central chamber used as sanctum was domed and four barrel vaulted verandahs surrounded the sanctum intersected by domes at the corner (drg. 8.4 and 8.5).

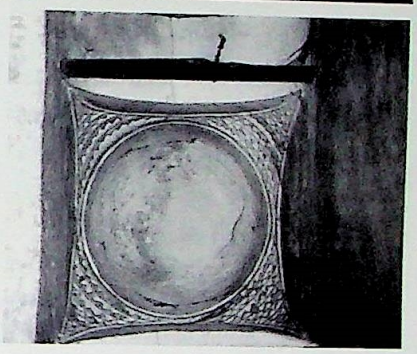

Fig. 8.22: Corbelling used to cover the vestibule, Baidyapur *Deul*, Burdwan 1598 CE.

Fig. 8.23: A small dome on brick pendentives, Sanctum of Ananta Vasudev temple, Kalna.

Fig. 8.24: Corbelling used on small side spaces, Sanctum of Ananta Vasudev temple, Kalna

It is interesting to note that traditional corbelling method for roof construction was never stopped in Bengal (fig. 8.22) and the structures using the *charchala* roof were using corbelling and vaulting both methods of covering. In one earlier example the *mandapa* of the Syamalesvara temple at Dantan built in the twelfth century covered by the elongated *charchala* roof is corbelled from inside (fig.6.13) whereas at Ghatal the square temple has a vaulted *charchala* roof. In the *atchala* structures with three-arched porch, the elongated sanctum used to have a ceiling divided in three parts. The central square space had a dome while on the sides corbelled ceiling can be seen (fig.8.23, 8.24). Even in the seventeenth century tomb of Biwi Pari at Dhakha, corbelling is used in each and every square and rectangular space.[26] In the *ratna* temples, the *ratna* aedicules used on the corners generally had corbelled ceiling which some times matched with the external profile of the temple.

[26] Asher, in *Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, 1984, p.198.

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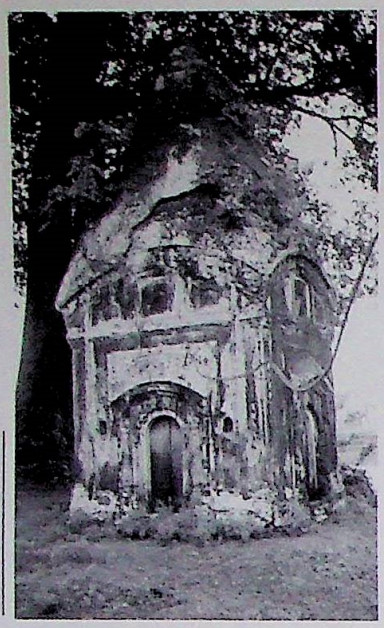

Fig. 8.25: Straight edged pyramidal *charchala* roof, Kiritesvari temple, Ruined at Baranagar, Murshidabad, 16th century.

Roofs with curved cornice

It is the roof with curved cornices in these temples that characterize them and unlike Islamic structures the roofs of these temples imitate the various hut forms. The *charchala* roof with four sloping sides can be seen in two forms in early temples; the straight edged pyramidal, or the rounded, but both with the curved cornice. The Ghatal temple of 1490 CE in Midnapore shows the rounded sloping sides of the roof in both structures of the sanctum and porch. The Raghunath temple at Ghurisha of 1633 CE also has a roof of the rounded profile (fig.8.7), but the ruined Kiritesvari temple of the sixteenth century near Baranagar at Murshidabad has a roof which is the straight edged pyramidal (fig.8.25) and the recently disappeared Gopala temple of 1572 CE at Amadpur also had a straight edged pyramidal roof[27] resembling a *latina shikhara*. The *atchala* temples of the seventeenth century and later experimented in many ways with elongated tower, elongated base, and later even with *rathaka* projections on the roof. These roofs of the *charchala* temples are crowned by a finial which has a small diameter *amalaka* and a thin *kalasha*.

Another important aspect to be observed here about the *atchala* or *barochala* temples is their ceiling. The earlier temples of this type has domical vault ribbed from inside while the later *atchala* temples added three arched porch on one side to have a rectangular sanctum (see the plan drg.8.2). The domical ceiling of the sanctum had no relation with the two tier *atchala* roof which has a miniature *charchala* kept on the center of the lower *charchala* roof.

The *bangla* roof may also be seen in two forms. One elongated roof is with a curved ridge, curved cornices and gable ends, and other is with a shorter curved ridge stopping before the end and instead of gable ends curved sloping side with curved cornice may be seen

Fig. 8.26: Bangla type structure with gable ended roof, 1660 CE, Tomb of Fateh Khan, Qadam Rasul complex at Gaur.

[27] Michell, 1997, p. 203.

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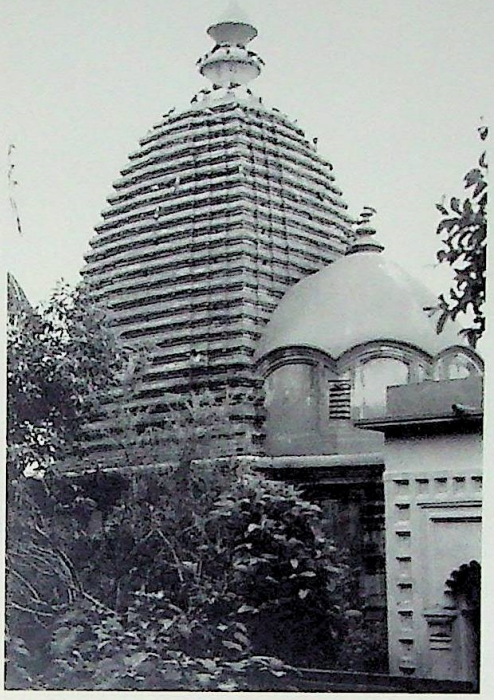

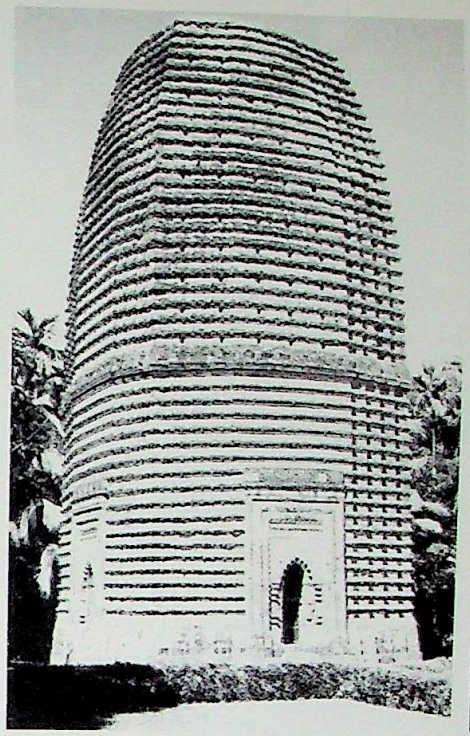

left to right
Fig. 8.27: *Shikhara* with horizontal ridges and no *latas*, Gopala temple, Kulingram, Memari, 17th century.

Fig. 8.28: *Shikhara* with horizontal ridges on lower part also, Kodla Math at Bagerhat, 17th century.

(fig.8.9). This type of *bangla* roof may also be said to be the *charchala bangla* roof. The earliest *bangla* roofs are reported from the *jorbangla* temple of the Chaitanyadeva at Guptipara (fig.8.10). These have gable ended roof form and appears like simple huts joined together. A similar *ekabangla* structure was built in the Qadam Rasul complex at Gaur used as the tomb of Fath Khan who died in 1657 CE[28] (fig.8.26). The earliest *jorbangla* temples have only one hut acting as sanctum crowned by one central or three finials like in Gangeshvara temple at Jiaganj, Baranagar which has three *sivalingas* installed in the sanctum. In case of the Keshtaraya temple at Bishnupur, the *bangla* roofs are uncrowned and a central *charchala* tower above the sanctum is crowned (fig.8.11).

The *ratna* temple roof form originated from a lean-to roof on all four sides of the central shrine. This roof has a sweeping curved cornice on all four sides, which gradually slope towards the edge (fig. 8.14-8.17). Other than the curved cornice the significant part on the *ratna* temples roof is the design of the *ratna* aedicule. As was observed during the development of the *latina* temples in the fifteenth century the *shikhara* of these temples started having tiers of *kapotapali* mouldings and the practice of forming *venukosha* in the *karnaratha* and *bhumi amalakas* altogether stopped. Late mediaeval temples were built even without the *madhyalata* and only with horizontal ridging as found on the Gopala temple of Kulingram near Memari and Kodla Math at Bagerhat, Khulna[29] which uses horizontal ridging on the *mandovara* also(fig.8.27, 8.28). Earlier in the sixteenth century the *latina* temples lost their *lata* and aptly called *rekha* temples in Bengal but the *rekha* or *latina* temples of the seventeenth century as seen on *ratna* shrines lost the profile of their *shikhara* also. When the *latina* temples re-surfaced used as the central shrine of the *ratna* temples the *shikhara* became stunted with the *mandovara* part having many shallow *rathaka* projections continued on the horizontal ridging of the *shikhara* (fig.8.14-8.17).

The *shikhara* of the *ratna* shrines underwent much experimentation that was mainly in the horizontal ridges. Sometimes they became very fine and shallow with the profile of the

[28] Asher, in *Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, 1984, p.83.
[29] Alam, 1984, p.75.

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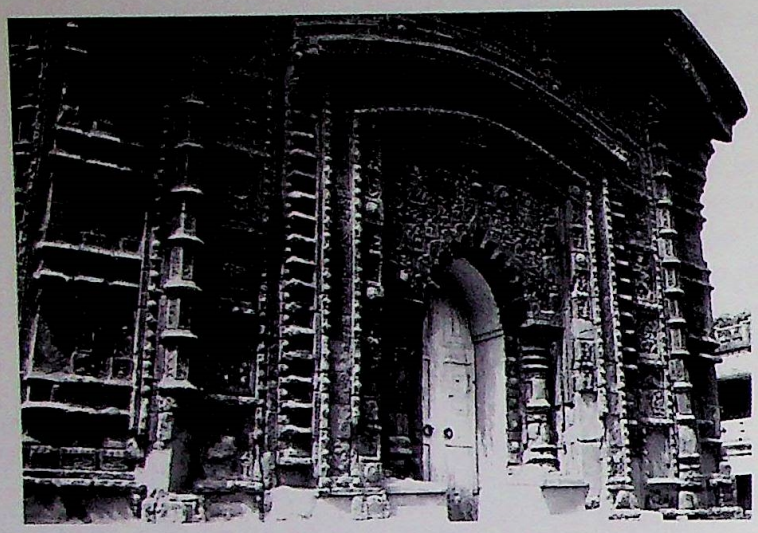

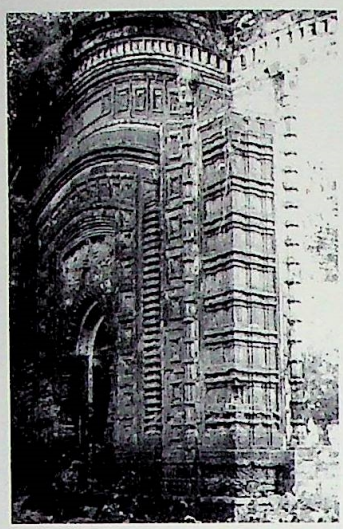

Fig. 8.29: Single arched entrance framed in a rectangle, Raghunath temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum, 1633 CE.

Fig. 8.30: Detail of the corner pilaster with two vertical posts resembling bamboo, *Charchala* temple at Jiaganj, Baranagar in Murshidabad.

shikhara decided only by the size of base and height. In later examples of the seventeenth century the ridges became curved also on whole body of the *shikhara*. One such *ratna* aedicule is also used as a superimposed shrine also, on the gable ended wall of the *bangla* temple at Jiaganj, Baranagar, Murshidabad displaying the traditional principle of superimposition of miniature temple aedicules on the body of the temple (fig. 8.38).

In these roofs we see continuity of the vernacular traditions but except the design of the *ratna* aedicules nothing can be traced from the Pala-Sena period. Even in the design of the *ratna* aedicules new innovations such as curved ridges were used and the *latina* term may not be associated with these temple forms.

Plinth and Base mouldings

The temples of Bengal built after 1500 CE seems to have abandoned the use of plinth and base mouldings. The temples were built on a high plinth which was built of plain stone masonry. The base mouldings used on some terracotta temples are very shallow and appear to be the extension of the bases of the columns and might have not been inspired by the past traditions. On the some rare *latina* temples of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, base mouldings may be observed but the best of the tradition was seen last on the Barakar temples of the fifteenth century. It is surprising to note that such an important tradition of Indian architecture which was adopted by Islamic structures with great effect as seen on the Eklakhi tomb at Pandua (fig.7.31), Dakhil Darwaza (fig.7.38) and Tantipara mosque at Gaur was abandoned altogether by the later builders of the brick temples in Bengal.

Walls and Wall treatment

The walls of these late fifteenth & sixteenth century temples were generally flat and any articulation was provided by the framing of the panels on the wall. The arched openings were framed in a rectangle and the material used dictated the amount of articulation on the wall. The walls decorated by the rich terracotta panels displayed a framing perhaps imitating the thatched panels framed by the bamboo posts. Such panels of the terracotta are seen on the Qadam Rasul structure in Gaur in the early sixteenth century. In some richly decorated temples such as at Ghurisha, bamboo posts are imitated in richly carved terracotta plaques (fig.8.29). The stone temples were similarly treated on the wall. Except in very ornate temples the articulation was done on front face and on two side faces only.

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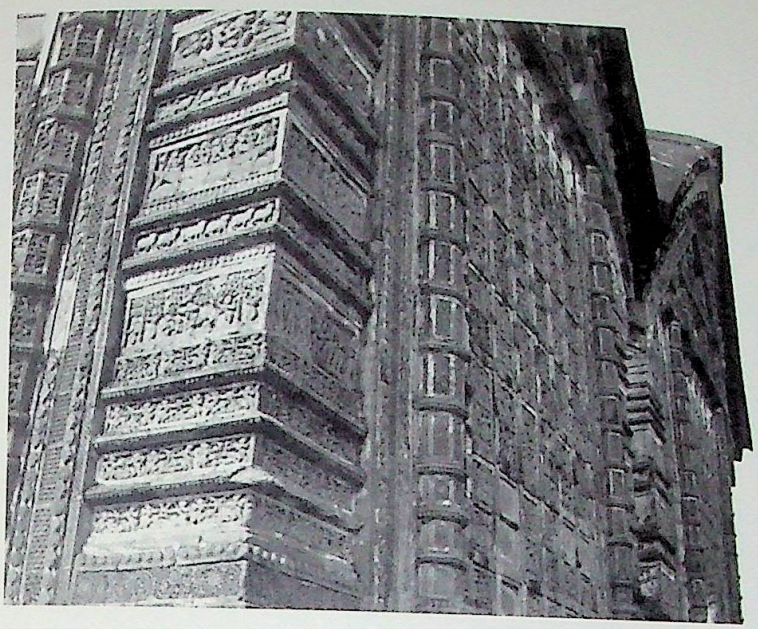

Fig. 8.31: Detail of the corner pilaster with two vertical posts resembling bamboo, Keshtaraya temple, Bishnupur, Bankura.

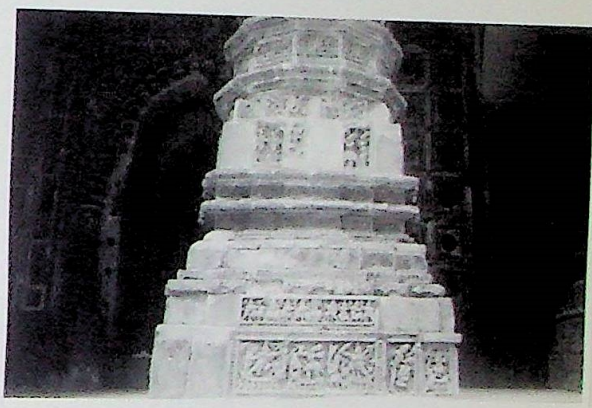

Fig. 8.32: Base of a multi-faceted pillar covered with terracotta panels

As observed earlier, the rich wall articulation seen on the Adina mosque or on Eklakhi tomb at Pandua with alternating flat and sunken panels was abandoned and the wall portions of the temples were covered by small terracotta panels. One reason for such a change may be smaller size of monuments where repetition of any aedicular composition was not possible. An interesting aspect of the wall decoration in these temples was the treatment of the corners of the temple wall. Since placing of the corner towers projecting out of the plan was altogether abandoned in the temples, the corners were richly decorated by the terracotta panels. Many shallow horizontal mouldings divided the corner pilaster which has some vestiges of the base mouldings also. This corner feature is being termed as corner pilaster as it represents the idea of a corner tower and includes the thin columns resembling bamboo posts fixed on both sides of the wall. Even in the simplest of the temples such as Singhavahini at Ghatal, corners of the walls were decorated. The decoration on the corners may be compared with the bamboo post framing appearing like the posts tied with ropes at regular intervals thus holding together the superstructure as found on the temples of Jiaganj in Murshidabad and Bishnupur in Bankura (fig.8.30, 8.31).

Pillars and Arched openings

In Bengal architecture the use of pillar was a continuous phenomenon. In the chapters six and seven we have observed how the design of the Pala period pillars transformed to form stunted, multifaceted pillars of the Islamic structures. These typical pillars with octagonal shaft and the square capital and base were used in the Adina mosque in 1375 CE, but it was the use of these pillars in the Qadam Rasul structure in 1525 CE in combination with arches which made them so popular for temples. The three arched entrance in combination with two full and two half pillars is the most visible composition on the walls of the sixteenth and seventeenth century temples.

The pillars used in these temples with triple arches were essentially modeled on the Pala-Sena period pillars, which are more similar when built in stone (fig.8.14). When

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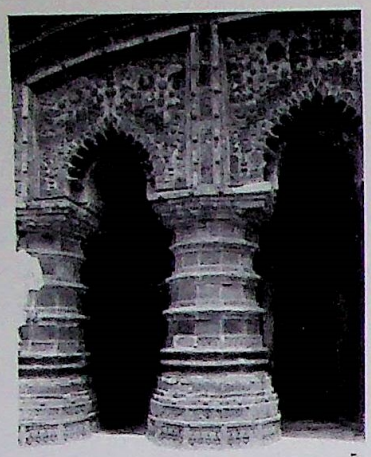

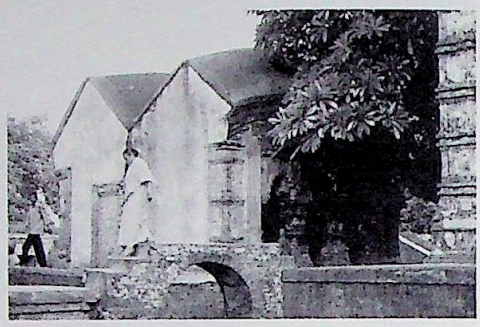

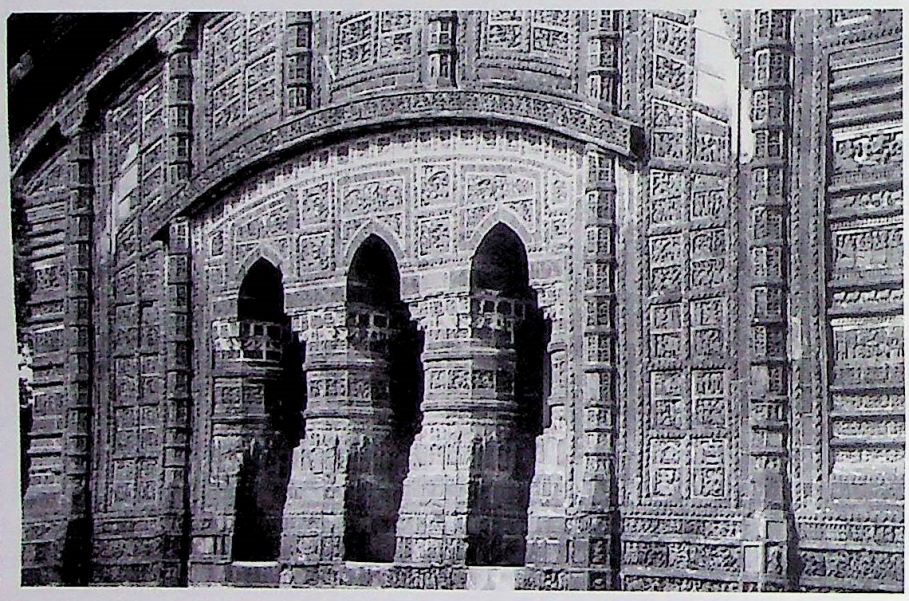

Left, right, bottom
Fig. 8.33: A multi-faceted pillar with multi-foliated arch, Vasudeva temple at Bansberia.

Fig. 8.34: Three arched entrance with multi-faceted pillar and multi-foliated arch, Chaitanyadeva temple at Guptipara.

Fig. 8.35: Keshtaraya temple at Bishnupur, 17th century.

used in brick temples, some changes were introduced in these pillars. Since the pillars used on the façades of these temples became main feature they were decorated with terracotta panels of smaller sizes and due to this, the square bases and square capitals were changed to octagonal also and the shafts became multifaceted. The shafts were further divided by two to five mouldings into smaller parts to afford decoration by the terracotta panels as found on the Vasudeva temple of Bansberia (fig.8.32).

Here it may be said that the pillars inspired from the Pala-Sena tradition used in these temples carries on them the most visible contribution of Islamic architecture, the 'drop arch'[30] to form a pleasing façade giving identity to the temple architecture of the later mediaeval period in Bengal. The triple arched entrance was used more frequently by the *ratna* temples for their covered verandahs on all sides of the shrine. Later *at-chala* structures which has a small porch preceding the sanctum also used this composition with great effect. This three-arched entrance was not used by the single cell *chala* structures which used the single arched entrance framed in a rectangle exquisitely decorated with terracotta panels as found on the Raghunath temple at Ghurisha (fig.8.29). The *jorbangla* temples using one hut or *bangla* as entrance porch also used the combination of three-arched entrance

[30] Brown, P. *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period.* Bombay, 1956, Chapter VIII Provincial Style : Bengal 1300AD-1550AD. p.37.

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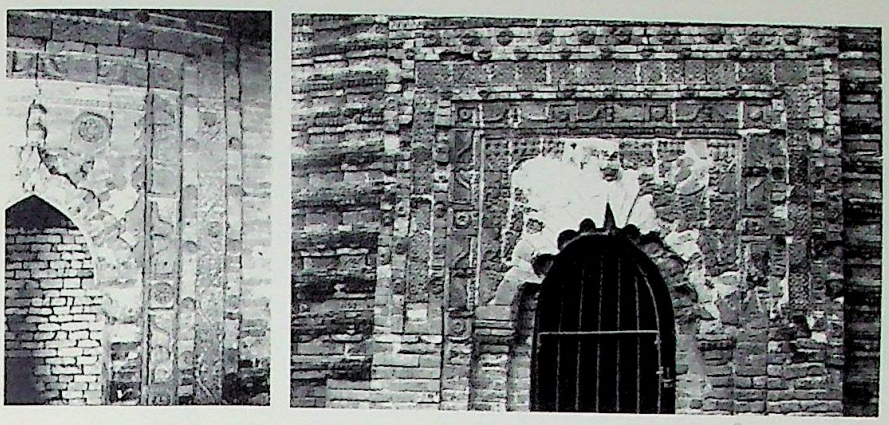

Fig. 8.36: Foliated three triangle motif on arch spandrel and bow motif on arch frame, Chaitanyadeva temple at Guptipara and Baidyapur deul, 16th century.

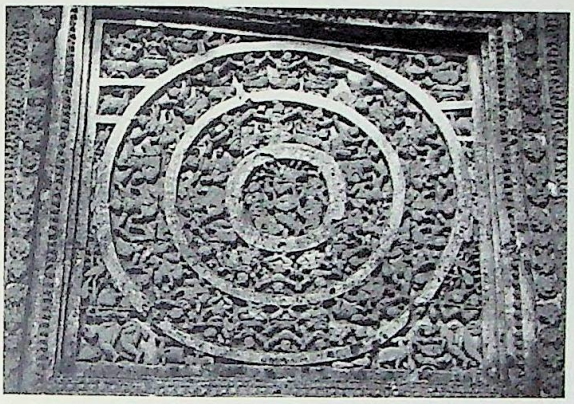

Fig. 8.37: Rasamandal panel on the side of triple arched entrance, Shyamraya temple at Bishnupur, 17th century.

Fig. 8.38: *Ratna* aedicule with curved ridges, superimposed on *Bangla* temple, Jiaganj, Baranagar, Murshidabad, 17th century.

with heavy pillars. The arches used in this combination are generally 'drop arches' but with these pointed arches, multi-foliated arch fronts were used for decoration on the Keshtaraya temple at Bishnupur and Chaitanyadeva temple at Guptipara (8.33, 34, 35).

These temples found enough spaces within the rectangle framing three arches and pillars for exquisite decorations by carved terracotta panels, on top of the arches, on frames of the arches and also on the sides of the multifaceted columns. Any opening on the walls of the late medieval temples is an arched opening even for windows and on the outer surface it was framed by terracotta panels in a rectangle following the tradition started with the arches of the Eklakhi tomb. Interestingly stone doorways of earlier elaborate design were not used in these temples but their patterns were copied.

Decorative Elements and Motifs

With the revival of Hindu Vaishnavism spearheaded by Chaitanyadeva, the subjects of Krishna and Rama's life were used as main iconographic scheme for the terracotta panels on these temples (fig.8.19, 20, 21 and 8.37). This issue, however, is kept out of the scope of this study as the vastness and richness of the subject may require a larger study. Here an observation is made about some other motifs which were earlier found on Islamic structures and continued to be used on brick structures of Bengal.

The multifoliated arch in three triangles as found on the top of the Principal *mihrab* of the Adina mosque was also used in later Islamic structures such as the Tantipara mosque at Gaur translated in terracotta. In a more foliated form it is first seen on the arches of the *jorbangla* temple of the Chaitanyadeva at Guptipara (fig.8.36) and continues to be used later on all arched openings of the temples.

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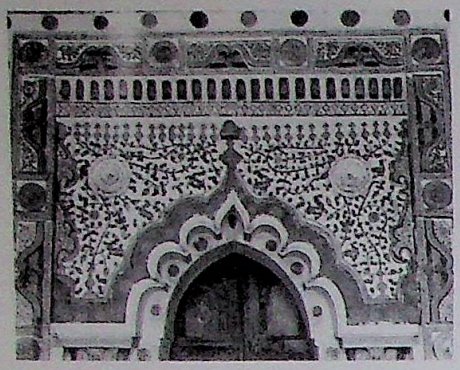
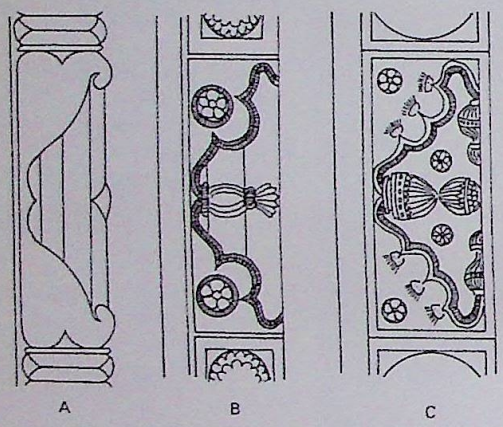


Fig. 8.39: Bow motif and arch spandrel decoration, Radha Ballabh temple, Krishnanagar.

Many small details, which are carved on the terracotta panels used for the decoration of these temples, owe their origin from the Pala-Sena period with a great variety of strip motifs introduced by Muslims. The list may include the lotus stem with wavy pattern, the lotus and diamond, the lotus petal frieze, the trefoil, the rosette, the finial, the festoon, the twisted rope, the palm tree and also the chequered square and *swastikas*. These were used in the terracotta panels on the base mouldings and wall niches of the Eklakhi tomb at Pandua (fig.7.31) and Dakhil Darwaza at Gaur (fig.7.38).

Another important detail which always remained present in Bengal architecture was a kind of stylized bow[31], which must have originated from the lotus pattern as explained by Adam Hardy. It was seen on all the stone doorframes of the Pala-Sena period used in the temples and re-used in the mosques. In a very elaborately decorated doorjamb it may be seen above the arch-frame of the Principal *mihrab* of the Adina mosque, where the jamb is re-used horizontally as a part of the composite lintel (fig. 7.28). In the temples of the late mediaeval period it is used on the arch frames in shallow terracotta panels found on the Chaitanyadeva temple at Guptipara, the Radha Ballabh temple at Krishnanagar and the Vasudeva temple at Bansberia (fig.8.36, 8.39 and drg.8.6, source: McCutchion, 1968, reprint, 1984).



Drg. 8.6: Detail of the Bow motif used on the doorframes and arch frames.

The niches used on the walls of the Islamic structures are not used that frequently on the temple facades as on the Islamic structures they were part of the wall treatment with alternating flat and sunken panels, the scheme which was not used on the later temples. However in the Radhaballabh temple at Krishnanagar we see the use of hanging bell motif in an arched niche.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Bengal was ready for a proliferation in temple building activity as the small kings and landholders enjoying autonomy in Mughal rule embraced Vaishnavism as preached by Chaitanyadeva and his disciples and scores of temples were built using above described characteristics. The builders of these temples were also the successors of the famous eastern school of art and their buildings display the continuity of tradition and innovation of application of the available techniques and resources.¶

[31] McCutchion, 1968, p.248. article is reprinted in *The Islamic Heritage of Bengal*, ed. George Michell, UNESCO, Paris, 1984, p.213-230.

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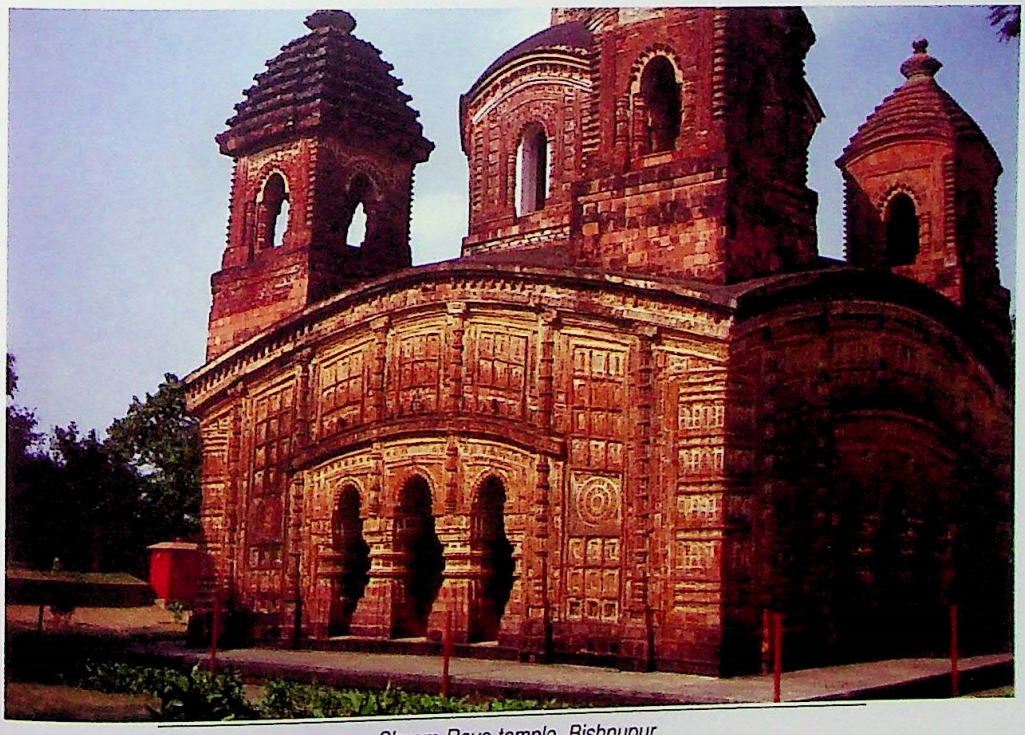
Raghunath temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum



Shyam Raya temple, Bishnupur

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Raghunath temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum

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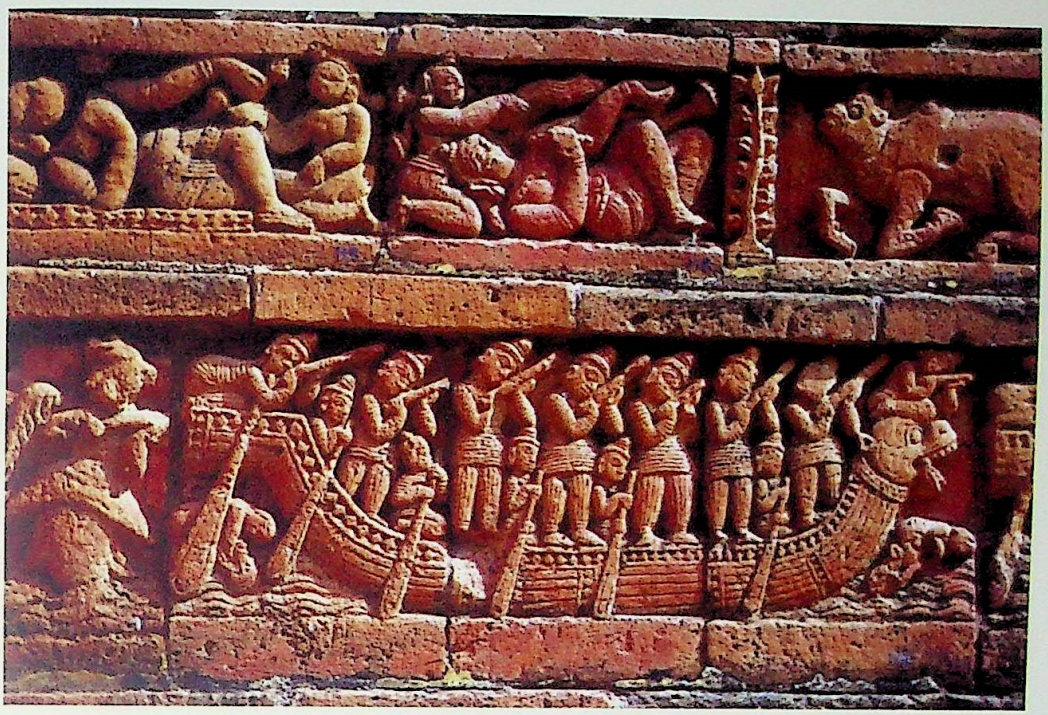
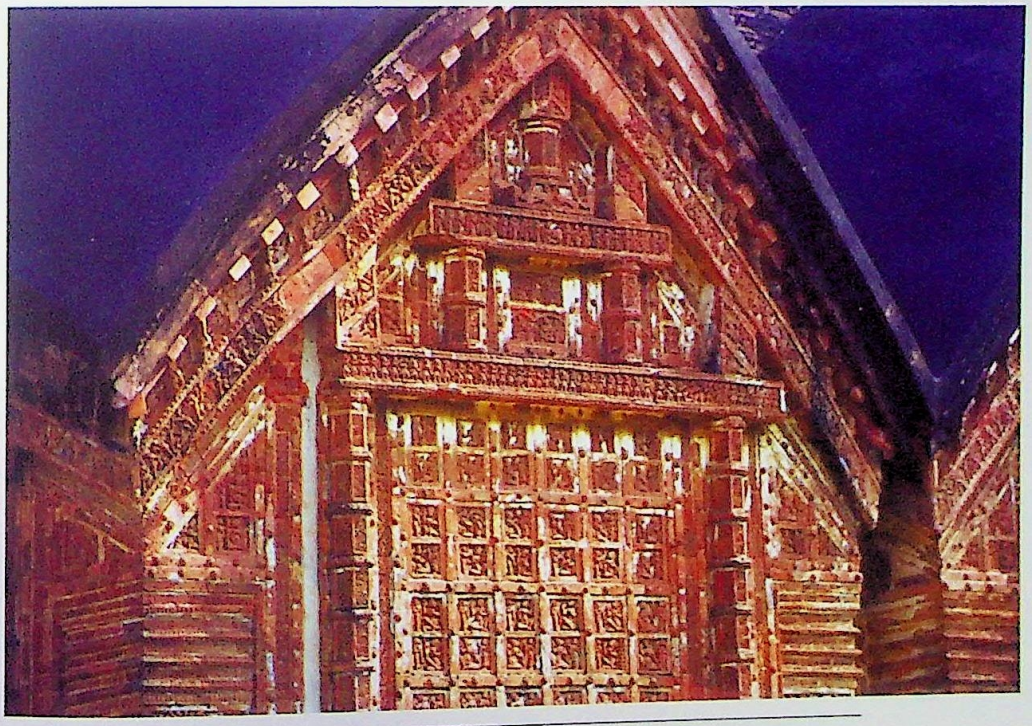


Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur



Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur

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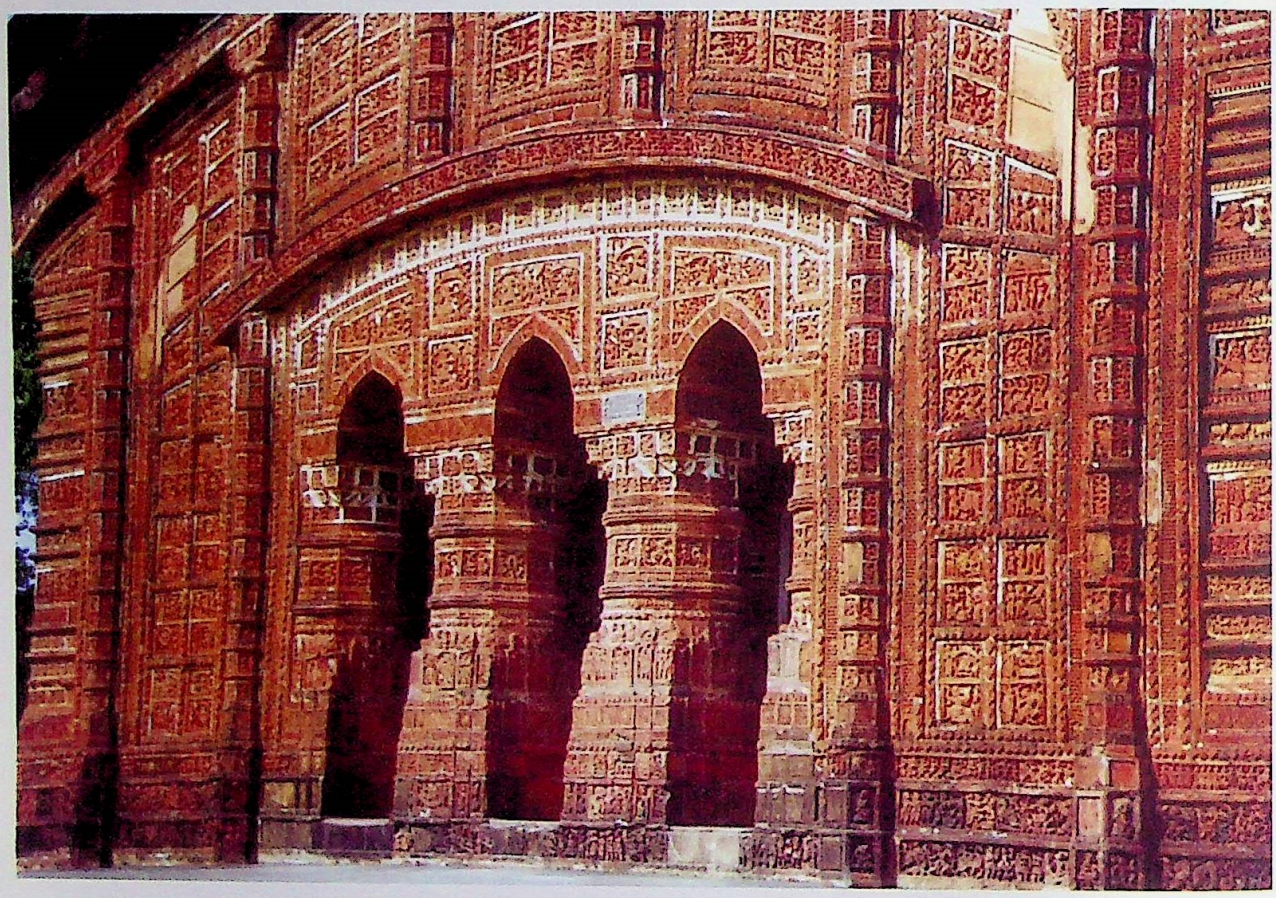

Keshtaraya temple, Bishnupur

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Temple Architecture of Eastern India:

9th to 16th century, Conclusion

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Conclusion

The present study of the temple architecture in Bengal presented a systematic overview of all the architectural activities taking place in the Bengal region from 9th to 16th century. In the end it may be concluded that until Islamic influences were experienced in Bengal, the temple architecture remained a part of the larger north Indian *Nagara* tradition evident in the modes used for the temple building. Many regional factors caused the development of a few specific types of *Latina* temples and some peculiarities were observed with in the *'Nagara'* tradition of temple architecture.

With the description of each type of *latina* shrine in Bengal some conclusions about their characteristics are drawn and need not to be repeated here. The emergence of three types of *latina* shrines with in the small geographical area highlights the nature that in *nagara* tradition the continuity is ensured in change and variation is acclaimed but with in the rules transmitted meticulously from master to pupil.[1] Here in Bengal also regional variations within the rules were observed.

In the words of Hardy, "form creates meaning as much as meaning form: it is only by making tangible, whether in concepts, sounds or masonry, an intuition of what is beyond form, that meaning can take shape, and ideas and powers be thought about and experienced; a pyramid of gods' names or of chiseled stones gives local habitation to a sense of emanatory hierarchy, itself a formulation of something beyond all grasp".[2]

It seems the roots of such concepts of the *nagara* tradition were deep in Bengal and the builders of temple were trying always to give form to the ideas prevalent during that time manifested in introduction and experimentation of the aedicules on the body of the *mulaprasada* of the temples. Bengali builders were also aware about the nature of the temple as the 'dynamic microcosm', and they also followed the principle that 'emergence leads to expansion followed by dissolution and reabsorption'[3]. Their ideas of expressing movement in architecture can be seen in the projection of aedicules, the progressive multiplication seen in the rows and columns of temple aedicules placed on the *shikharas* of the temples, and expanding repetition seen in placing of heart-shaped *gavakshas* and multiple *gavaksha* patterns on *shikharas*. The placing of *kutastambha* and pilasters on the *jangha* as if supporting the many storied pavilions forming *shikharas* and the presence of corner *amalakas* are a few other notable aspects of the larger *nagara* tradition.[4]

But the most noteworthy idea seems to be 'emanation' which can be seen in placing of the heart-shaped *gavakshas* with images and architectural interpretation of the concept of Shiva-Shakti union. This is represented by the superimposition of *valabhi* mode meant for Shakti shrines on the *latina* shrines generally used for Shiva temples. As a deep rooted religious belief it is considered that Shiva and Shakti are incomplete without each other hence we observed not only *valabhi* aedicule superimposed on *latina* shrine but reverse also as seen on *valabhi* shrine at Garhbeta with *latina* aedicules superimposed on its sides. With the advent of Islam in Bengal architectural activities in the area around the Islamic capitals faced disruption and despoliation. However temple building continued in the south

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[1] Hardy, Adam. *Indian Temple Architecture: Form and Transformation, The Karnata Dravida Tradition, 7th to 13th centuries*, Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts & Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1995, p. 308

[2] Ibid. p.309.

[3] Ibid. p. 19, 20.

[4] Meister, Michael W.*The Language and Process of Early Indian Architecture*, California, 1991, plate XXV, fig.4 showing Rajivalochana temple, Rajim, explaining the palatial structuring of the façade of the temple. Also noted are fig. 3 and 5 showing separation of *kutas*.

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and west Bengal up to the end of fifteenth century unaffected from Islamic developments. The development of a regional style of architecture in Bengal was facilitated by the strong artistic traditions continued from the Pala-Sena period, introduction of the new structural methods to formalize the vernacular traditions and the newfound vigour of nationalism in Hussain Shahi Bengal along with the revival of Vaishnavism.

Even in Islamic architecture, when in early phase, Bengali builders expressed their idea of repetition of aedicular components in wall treatment of plain surfaces by placing trefoiled ornate niches, middle cornice and base mouldings in a sunken panel. On the walls of the late mediaeval temples these ideas were represented by the terracotta panels and by placing of miniature shrines in large numbers on top of the arches and arched openings.

The concept of multiplication, expansion and movement as explained by Hardy in context of Indian architecture were not forgotten by Bengali builders even after a lull in temple building during the early sixteenth century. The above ideas always remained with the Bengali builders and these were later manifested in duplication of the *chala* pattern on top forming the *atchala, barochala* and then duplication of longer huts in to *jorbangla*. They were brought to a climax in the formation of many *atchala* shrines of Shiva in a circle reaching up to one hundred and eight in Burdwan. The *latina shikhara* on top of the *chala* roof as central *ratna* in the *ratna* temples did not afford much within it, hence the *ratna* aedicules were devised to keep them on corners forming the *pancharatna*. The proliferation of the *ratna* aedicules also reached from one to five and then to nine and then reaching up to twenty-five. The temple architecture of Bengal continued its best traditions up to the time till when it received the patronage and could reflect the social values of Bengali community.

Since the above study was conducted by an architect involved in the conservation of architectural heritage, following points may be made regarding the conservation of the temples of Bengal which are fast disappearing.

1. Through this study it is recognized that the early temples of Bengal are facing imminent danger of obliteration due to various factors in which neglect and ignorance are on the top of the list. This precious heritage is of immense value as these temples belong to a period when Bengali culture was taking its roots, hence concerted efforts are needed to identify and document these early temples.
2. The main centers of temple building in Bengal are on the banks of rivers such as Kasai in Purulia, Dwarkeshwar in Bankura and Damodar in Burdwan and Purulia. The location of these temple sites on the riverbanks makes them extremely vulnerable, a fact highlighted by the collapse of the Temple I of Boram in the flash floods of July, 2002. Their conservation strategy should begin from the site protection and comprehensive measures to protect the historic zone.
3. Once the importance of site and significance of architecture is understood by the community the conservation works would be easier with the involvement of the community who would see an association with the architectural heritage. Hence there is a great need of documentation and presentation of information in an easily understood format.
4. We have observed very badly restored temples in Bengal and it is a recognized fact that heritage suffers at the hands of restorer also. The aedicular components of the temples were seen to be disturbed, *vedibandhas* were made plain and the geometry of heart-shaped *gavakshas* was changed beyond recognition after some restoration works. In some cases the profile of the *shikhara* was lost due to restoration and others attempted at crude carving in cement plaster imitating stuccowork.

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The studies such as the present one identify the essential elements of the architecture of any temple and try to find meaning beyond forms. These meanings may be well known to the community who built these edifices, but it is necessary to explain these to the general masses that are concerned with the heritage. If a temple and its various parts were well understood with the meanings they embody, the conservation in correct manner would follow.

A fact about India's heritage is that so many of India's religious buildings did survive the ravages of time just because they embody meaning – an intangible heritage.[5] Today there is a need to view conservation of architectural heritage at two levels. The first need is to identify, revive and strengthen the underlying ideas of that heritage which is the intangible heritage and the other level is the physical aspects of heritage and the correct representation of the intangible heritage.¶

[5] International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Charter, 2003 promulgated at the end of their General Assembly meeting held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in 2003 has brought forward the issue of the conservation of Intangible heritage.

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Appendix 'A'

GLOSSARY

Sanskrit, Bangla and a few special terms used in this study:

Aedicule:	image or representation of a building (of a shrine) used as an architectural element
Aedicular component:	compositional unit of a composite temple form, consisting of an aedicule or a related image such as *kuta-stambha*
Amalaka:	'myrobalan fruit' (without any impurities); ribbed crowing mem ber in *Nagara* shrines
Amalasaraka:	Same as above
Antarala:	antechamber in front of the *Garbhagriha*, usually linking with *mandapa*
Atchala:	rural hut in Bengal with eight sloping sides of the roof in two tiers, a type of temple.
Bangla:	rural hut in Bengal with two sloping sides of the roof with curved cornices and gable ended roof, a type of temple, also called *ekabangla*
Bandhana:	the middle moulding dividing the *jangha* part of *mandovara* forming *panchanga mandovara*.
Barochala:	rural hut in Bengal with twelve sloping sides of the roof in three tiers, a type of temple.
Bhadra:	principal projection on the wall of a structure, usually on cardinal axis
Bhumija:	one of the later, composite modes of *nagara* Temple
Bhumi:	"earth", "level"; horizontal division or story in a *nagara* superstructure
Bhumi-amalakas:	*amalakas* placed at the corners of the temple tower denoting the levels
Brijbhasha:	the language spoken in the Brij region near Mathura and Agra district, considered derived from Sanskrit and basis of Bangla language
Chaitya:	sacred spot
Chala:	sloping side of the roof of a rural hut in Bengal
Charchala:	rural hut in Bengal with twelve sloping sides in the roof in three tiers, a type of temple
Dravida:	'southern' language of temple architecture
Darwaja:	doorframe or doorway
Gavaksha:	horseshoe arch gable motif in *nagara* temple architecture
Garbhagriha:	the sanctum of the temple
Ghanta:	the element below *amalaka* in the *mastaka* of a *phamsana* shrine
Ghata:	"vase", "pot"; cushion like capitals in pillars and pilasters
Ghazi:	an Islamic warrior
Griva:	"neck"; recess under *amalaka* and above *skandha* of a shrine
Jagmohan:	*see mandapa,* covered structure in front of the sanctum of a temple
Jala or Jali:	grille, grille pattern
Jangha:	Part of wall zone between *varandika* (cornice) and *vedibandha* (plinth moulding) of a temple
Jharokha:	an ornate balcony with pilastered pavilion
Jorbangla:	a temple type with twin hut type structure
Kalasha:	"pot"; vase-finial, stupi; cushion moulding in plinth
Kapota:	eaves moulding, (the *kapota* cornice)
Kapotapali:	eaves moulding
Karna-rathas:	corner strips on the temple tower
Khakhara deul:	*valabhi* mode of the *nagara* language in Oriya and Bangla language
Khura-Kumbha:	The two-tier bottom moulding of the *vedibandha* in temples
Kirti-mukha:	"face of glory"; face of monster, *vyala*, lion,
Kumbha:	the bottom moulding in plinth or *vedibandha*, though not always, as it often sits on a separate *khura* block forming *khura-kumbha.*
Kuta stambha:	pillar form (usually embedded, as a pilaster) crowned by an aedicule
Lata:	"creeper"; projecting vertical band in a *Nagara shikhara*

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Latina:	the basic unitary mode of *nagara* shrine
Linga:	phallic emblem of Siva
Madhyalata:	central "creeper"; projecting vertical band in a *nagara shikhara*
Makara:	crocodile like mythical beast
Makara-torana:	*torana* (archway) motifs spewed between the jaws of a pair of *makaras*
Mandapa:	pillared hall of temple, either closed (surrounded by walls) or open (without walls, except perhaps at rear, where sanctum adjoins), or partially open
Mandovara:	vertical wall zone of the sanctum of a temple comprising *vedibandha*, *jangha* and *varandika*
Mastaka:	the crowning element in the *nagara* temples comprising of three parts
Mihrab:	the niche facing which Muslims pray in mosques
Minar:	minarets
Mukhamandapa:	the entrance vestibule of a temple
Mulaprasada:	the sanctum of the temple from outside
Nagara:	'Northern' language of temple architecture
Nayika:	Dancing damsels
Nrityamandapa:	a *mandapa* used for dancing and singing devotional songs in a temple
Panchanga:	with five parts
Pancharatha:	plan form with five parts on one side of the wall, with two projections
Pancharatna:	*Ratna* temple with five *ratna* aedicules, four on four corners of roof level
Phamsana:	shrine mode with pyramidal superstructure of tiered eaves mouldings
Pidha:	Oriya and Bangla equivalent of *phamsana*
Pratiratha:	the middle strip between *lata* and *karnaratha* of a tower
Purnaghata:	'brimming vase' or 'vase of plenty' motif
Qibla:	the wall with *mihrab* niches in a mosque
Rathaka:	Offsets formed on *triratha* or *pancharatha* plan
Ratna:	a type of late mediaeval temple in Bengal characterized by a *latina* aedicule kept on sloping roofs with curved cornices
Rasamancha:	the pavilion on a raised platform used for devotional plays
Rekha:	*latina* temples as called in Bengal
Saptamatrikas:	series of seven forms of mother goddess
Sekhari:	one of the later, composite modes of *nagara* temple
Shakti:	a form of Durga, mother goddess
Shudras:	the lowest caste in Brahmanical society
Sikhara:	For *nagara* temples the whole superstructure or 'spire' of a *mulaprasada*
Skandha:	the top part of the *shikhara* on which *mastaka* rests
Stupa:	dome shaped religious structure of Buddhists or Jains, generally intended to contain a sacred relic
Stupi:	vase-finial
Torana:	arch like gateway: arch like motif
Triratha:	plan form with one central projection; hence three parts on the wall
Valabhi:	mode of *nagara* shrine with barrel vaulted roof
Varandika:	the set of cornice mouldings above which the *shikhara* starts
Vedi:	moulding used in parapet or above plinth, representing a railing: also an altar considered part of the wall
Vedibandha:	moulded base or 'plinth' of a *nagara* temple
Venukosha:	*gavaksha* pattern generally seen on *karnaratha* between *bhumi amalakas*
Vihara:	monastery

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Appendix 'B'

LIST OF THE TEMPLES STUDIED FROM THE PERIOD 800-1550CE

Format of the list:Name of the temple, Village / Site, Nearest Town or Police Station, District, Date of Construction.

A. BARAKAR TYPE, *LATINA* TEMPLES.

1. Siddheshwari Temple, Barakar, Burdwan, early 9th century
2. Kotaitundi temple, Khiching, Champua, early 9th century
3. Temple remains on the Chhotanagpur plateau, 9th century
4. Deulbhira temple, Deulbhira, Bankura, late 11th century.

B. TELKUPI TYPE, *LATINA* TEMPLES.

1. Shiva Temple, Banda near Cheliama, Purulia, 9th century
2. Chandrashekhara temple, Khiching, 13th century
3. Pakbira temples, Purulia, 13th century
4. Boram Shiva temple, Boram, Purulia, 13th century
5. Lakshmi Temple, Para, Purulia, 14th century
6. Shiva Temple I, Begunia Barakar, Burdwan, 1461.
7. Shiva Temple II, Begunia Group, Barakar, Burdwan, 1461.
8. Shiva Temple III, Begunia Group,Barakar, Burdwan, 1461.
9. Temple group at Pandra, Dhanbad, 16th century
10. Radha Damodar temple, Ghutgeria, Barjora, Bankura, 16th century.

C. *DEUL* TYPE, *LATINA* TEMPLES

1. Satdeuliya temple, Satdeuliya, Memari, Burdwan, 10th century
2. Jatar Deul, Sunderbans, South 24 Parganas, 975 CE
3. Surya temple, Sonatapal, Baliara, Bankura, 10th century
4. Temple I, Boram near Jaypur, Purulia, early 11th century
5. Temples II and III, Boram near Jaypur, Purulia, 11th century
6. Durga Temple, Para, Puruliya, 11th century
7. Siddhesvara Temple, Bahulara, Bankura, late 11th century
8. Sarvesvara Temple, Dihar near Bishnupur, Bankura, late 12th Century
9. Sallesvara Temple, Dihar near Bishnupur, Bankura, late 12th Century
10. Ichai Ghosher Deul, Gaurangpur, Burdwan, early 14th century
11. Ratnesvara temple, Jagannathpur, Barjora, Bankura, 16th century.
12. Shyamachand Temple, Dharapat near Bishnupur, Bankura, 1694.

D. *PHAMSANA* OR *PIRHA* TEMPLES

1. Ekteswar temple, Bankura, 10th century
2. Kangaresvara temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, 11th century
3. Syamalesvara temple, Dantan, Midnapore, 12th century
4. Siva Temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, 14th century
5. Sarvamangala temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, 13th century
6. Sarvamangala Temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, 1550 CE.
7. Raghunath Temple, Chandrakona, Midnapore, 17th century.
8. Dandesvara Temple, Karnagarh group, Midnapore, 17th century.

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Appendix 'C'

LIST OF THE TEMPLES STUDIED FROM THE PERIOD 1550CE ONWARDS

Format of the list: Name of the temple, Village / Site, Nearest Town or Police Station, District, Date of Construction.

A *CHALA* TYPE TEMPLES:

A-1. *Charchala* (four sides sloping roof)

1. Raghunath Temple, Ghurisha, Ilambazar, Birbhum, 1633.
2. Ramonathesvara temple, Baranagar, Jiaganj, Murshidabad, 1741.
3. Shiva temple, Ruppur, Kandi, Murshidabad, 17th century.
4. Kiritesvari Temple, Murshidabad, 16th century.
5. Suryesvara temple, Baghdanga, Kandi, Murshidabad, 17th century.

A-2. *Atchala* (two tiered four sides sloping roof).

1. Radha Ballabh temple, Garhbeta, Midnapore, 1676.
2. Gopala temple, Boragari near Pandua, Hooghly, 1679.
3. Sridhar temple, Hat Gobindpur, Burdwan, 1650.
4. Ananta Vasudev temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1754.
5. Vrindavan Chandra temple, Guptipara near Balagarh, Hooghly, 1800.
6. Krishna Chandra temple, Guptipara near Balagarh, Hooghly, 1810.
7. Gopala Temple, Amadpur, Memari, Burdwan, 18th century.
8. 108 Shiva temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1808.

B. *BANGLA* TYPE TEMPLES

B-1. *JorBangla* or Twin Elongated Hut-type

1. Chaitanyadeva temple, Guptipara near Balagarh, Hooghly, 16th century.
2. Keshta Raya temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, 1655.
3. Siddhesvari Temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1740.
4. Gangeswara Shiva temple, Baranagar, Jiaganj, Murshidabad, 1750.
5. Dayamayi temple, Saidabad, Murshidabad, 1759.
6. Radha Kanta temple, Singarkon, Kalna, Burdwan, 1750.
7. Dakshinbazar, Chandrakona, Midnapore, 17th century.

B-2. *Eka-Bangla* or Single Elongated Hut-type

1. Charbangla Shiva Temple, Baranagar, Jiaganj, Murshidabad, 1760.
2. Panchanan Shiva, Baranagar, Jiaganj, Murshidabad, 1760.

C. *LATER* LATINA *OR* REKHA *TEMPLES*

C-1. Small temples

1. Pratapesvara temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1840.
2. Shiva Temple, Surul near Bolpur, Birbhum, Late 18th century.
3. Shiva Temple, Supur near Bolpur, Birbhum, Late 18th century.

C-2. *Rekha Shikhara* type temples with *mandapas*

1. Krishna Deul of Baidyapur, Kalna, Burdwan, 1598.

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2. Gopala Temple, Kulingram, Memari, Burdwan, Early 17th century.
3. Laxmi Janardan temple, Debipur, Memari, Burdwan,1800.
4. Raghunath temple, Chandrakona, Midnapore, 17th century.
5. Dandesvara temple, Karnagarh, Midnapore, 18th century.
6. Jagannath Temple, Kesiari, Midnapore, 1820.

D. *RATNA* TYPE TEMPLES

D-1 *Eka-Ratna* temples

1. Lalji Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, 1658.
2. Nand Lala Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, 17th century
3. Radha Shyama Temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, 1758.
4. Vasudeva temple, Bansberia, Hooghly, 1679.
5. Ramachandra temple, Guptipara near Balagarh, Hooghly, 17th century.

D-2. *Pancharatna* temples

1. Shyamraya temple, Bishnupur, Bankura, 1643.
2. Mallesvara Temple, Chandrakona, Midnapore, 1700.
3. Laxmi Janardan temple, Surul near Bolpur, Birbhum,18th century.
4. Shiva temple, Hat Gobindpur, Burdwan, 18th century.
5. Vrindavanchandra temple, Gobarhati, Kandi, Murshidabad, 1772.

D-3. *Nav-Ratna* temples

1. Radha Vinod Temple, Kenduli Jaydev, Birbhum, 1750.
2. Santinatha Shiva temple, Mitrasenpur, Chandrakona, Midnapore, 1828.
3. Parvatinath Temple, Chandrakona, Midnapore, Late 18th century.
4. Shiva Temple, Chinsurah, Hooghly, Late 18th century.
5. Suryesvara Temple, Baghdanga, Kandi, Murshidabad, 18th century.
6. Lakshmi Janardan Temple, Ghurisha, Birbhum, Early 19th century.

D-4. *Panchvimsati Ratna* temples

1. Krishna-chandra Temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1751.
2. Lalji Temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1739.
3. Gopala Temple, Kalna, Burdwan, 1766.
4. Bhawanisvara Temple, Baranagar, Murshidabad, 18th century.

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Appendix 'D'

DISCUSSION ABOUT REPAIR AND RESTORATION OF EARLY TEMPLES OF BENGAL

Since many temples used in the present study are not securely dated, it is bound to raise a few questions about their possible dates of construction in view of many repair and restoration works done on these temples in various periods. The following discussion supplements the earlier mention made in the description of these temples of such restoration activities.

First two temples used in this study at Konch and Deo in Gaya region are examples of the eighth century as discussed in chapter three (pp. 37-38), but have undergone repairs and may appear to be from later period. Koncheshwar Mahadev temple (fig. 3.5-3.7) at Konch has been restored very crudely in last five years and its ancient appearance seen in a old photograph shows the presence of a large heart-shaped *gavaksha* on the body of the *shikhara*. The Pala period antiquities such as *Ashta shakti* and *Dasavtara* (Beglar, 1878, p.60) associated with it and housed in the modern *mandapa* of the temple and the intact *sivalinga* in the sanctum also suggests its eighth century date. The Surya temple at Deo (fig. 3.8-3.12) is possibly one of the five Sun temples located in the Gaya region belonging to the eighth and ninth centuries. The legends associated with the Sun temple at Deo mention the revival of Sun worship after restoration of this temple by a Rajput king in the sixteenth century. If we closely observe the topmost part of the *shikhara*, we observe a break in the gentle curve of the tower, which may be the result of a later restoration work. It is emphasized here that presence of the heart-shaped *gavaksha, valabhi* aedicule with longer side facing, geometry of smaller *gavakshas* and pilasters on *mandovara* are the important features of the temple which are significant for this study and clearly they have not been altered or added after restoration.

In chapter four of this study the most important example, Siddhesvara temple at Barakar (fig.4.1-4.3) dated from the ninth century by Krishna Deva and Frederick Asher (pp.66-67) also has some restored parts in its *shikhara,* whereas the *mandapa* of the temple was added later. Kotaitundi temple at Khiching (fig. 4.4-4.6) following the 'Barakar type' of the ninth and tenth centuries has a restored front and a few replaced parts on all its sides. Despite of these restorations, both these temples can be easily dated by the style of their *vedibandha* and their *triratha* plan with side aedicules.

In the discussion of the Telkupi type, the temple at Banda (fig. 4.18-4.24) is dated on the basis of its similarities with the temple no. 18 of Telkupi site and its date mentioned by Debala Mitra (pp.76-79). It is significant to note that like some of the Telkupi temples, the temple at Banda also remained in use till the end of the nineteenth century when J. D. Beglar visited these sites. Telkupi, Para and Banda area called Shekharbhum was under Panchet or Panchakot state and their rulers continuously patronized temples of the region. These rulers of Shikhara dynasty were feudatories of Pala and Sena kings and later of Muslim Sultans, Mughal Governors and Nawabs of Bengal. The temples at Banda and Telkupi might have been restored by these rulers and some Islamic influence may have crept in some detailing as observed in the *madhyalata* of the eastern face of the Banda temple (fig.4.23) and in the *mandapa* of the Telkupi temple no. 9. There are remains of a *mandapa* at Banda and many plain columns can be seen on the temple site, which clearly suggest later interventions on the site. Following the 'Telkupi type' the temples at Khiching are from the thirteenth century as discussed in chapter five but present temples of Chandrashekhara and Khichakesvari (fig.4.25-4.27) are restored substantially in upper parts. Here also it is important to emphasise that for the present study, *mandovara* part of these temples and the profile of the *shikhara* is of greater importance, which seem to have remained un-affected by restoration works.

In chapter five of this study many brick temples are studied which are covered by stucco plaster. J. D. Beglar in his report of tour through the study region in 1872 (Beglar, 1878) has

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mentioned many times that these temples might have been re-plastered during the Governorship of Raja Mansingh in the Mughal period of Emperor Akbar. As mentioned in chapter five on brick temples (pp.114-135), applying stucco or fine lime wash above cut brickwork was traditionally practiced in eastern India, and Beglar's observation may well be true. It is also true that living temples in India have always been intervened and any damage or defacement occurring was attended with good intentions not necessarily resulting into best solutions. The early brick temples of Bengal as they stand today are result of many minor repairs done over the years on the brick surfaces but the cut, carved and chiseled surfaces of brick are part of the original structure.

In the exquisitely plastered temples of Boram and Para (fig.5.11-5.26) the brick surfaces were carefully carved and chiseled even up to an area of a square inch and it seems these surfaces were intended for a fine lime-wash. The thick plaster presently seen may be the result of successive restorations. Similarly, the Siddhesvara temple at Bahulara (fig.5.27-5.30) has very finely cut brickwork and equally fine plasterwork. This temple has undergone repairs and here the plaster seems original and the *vedibandha* and front face has restored parts. This temple dated by scholars (see pg. 129) such as A. K. Coomaraswamy, K. N. Dikshit and S. K. Saraswati is used in this study as reference point for other brick temples of the region. By analyzing the Bahulara temple with its aedicular components of *valabhi* and *latina* aedicules, other temples are placed in a chronological sequence. The most significant parts in these temples are large heart-shaped *gavakshas*, *valabhi* aedicules with longer side facing, *latina* aedicules, pilasters on *mandovara* and smaller aedicules on the *shikhara*, and these parts are carved in cut brickwork, hence part of original structure.

To conclude this discussion it may be said that chronological sequencing of these temples is generally done on the basis of large aedicular components and larger features which are not much affected by later restoration works. Hence for the present study the restored status of these extremely important temples is not of much consequence.

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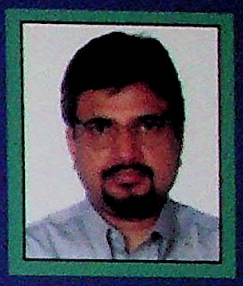
About the Author



Prof. Ajay Khare earned his doctorate from De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, where his work about the early temples of Bengal under Dr. Adam Hardy was highly appreciated. For his PhD he obtained the much-coveted Research Bursary of the University. An architect and conservationist educated at Lucknow University and School of Planning and Architecture, N. Delhi, Prof. Khare was the recipient of the fellowship of the Charles Wallace India Trust, London in 1993-95 during his second post-graduation in conservation studies at York University, UK.

He has many conservation and architectural projects to his credit in Rajasthan where he practiced with his architect wife, Rachna. Since 1998, Prof. Khare is teaching architecture and conservation, initially at Indraprastha University, N. Delhi and presently at Birla Institute of Technology, MESRA, Ranchi.

He has edited many conference proceedings and written articles, research papers and book reviews in national and international journals. In 1995, he published a monograph called 'Ghat ki Guni, Jaipur' for Rajasthan Government and presently contributing in books about Jaipur and Udaipur. Prof. Khare is vice-president of an NGO called 'DRONAH' and monitors its activities in eastern India including the publication of its bi-annual international journal called 'Context' as member of the board of editors.

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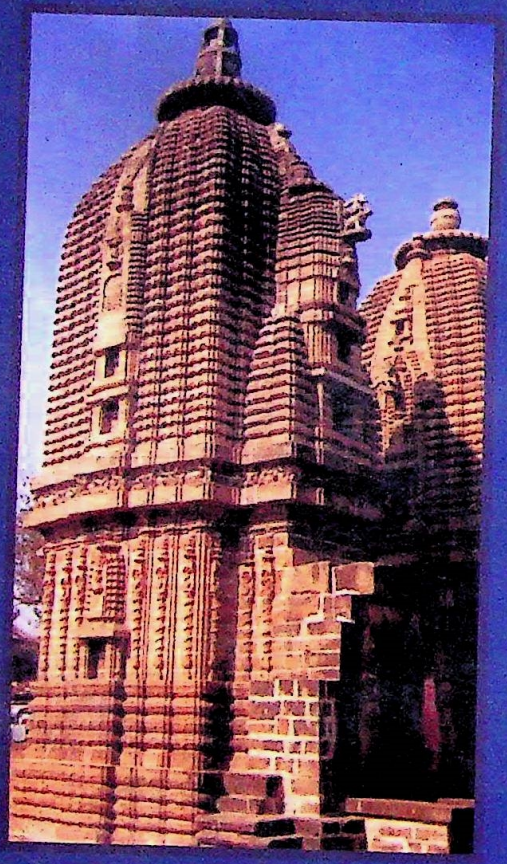

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